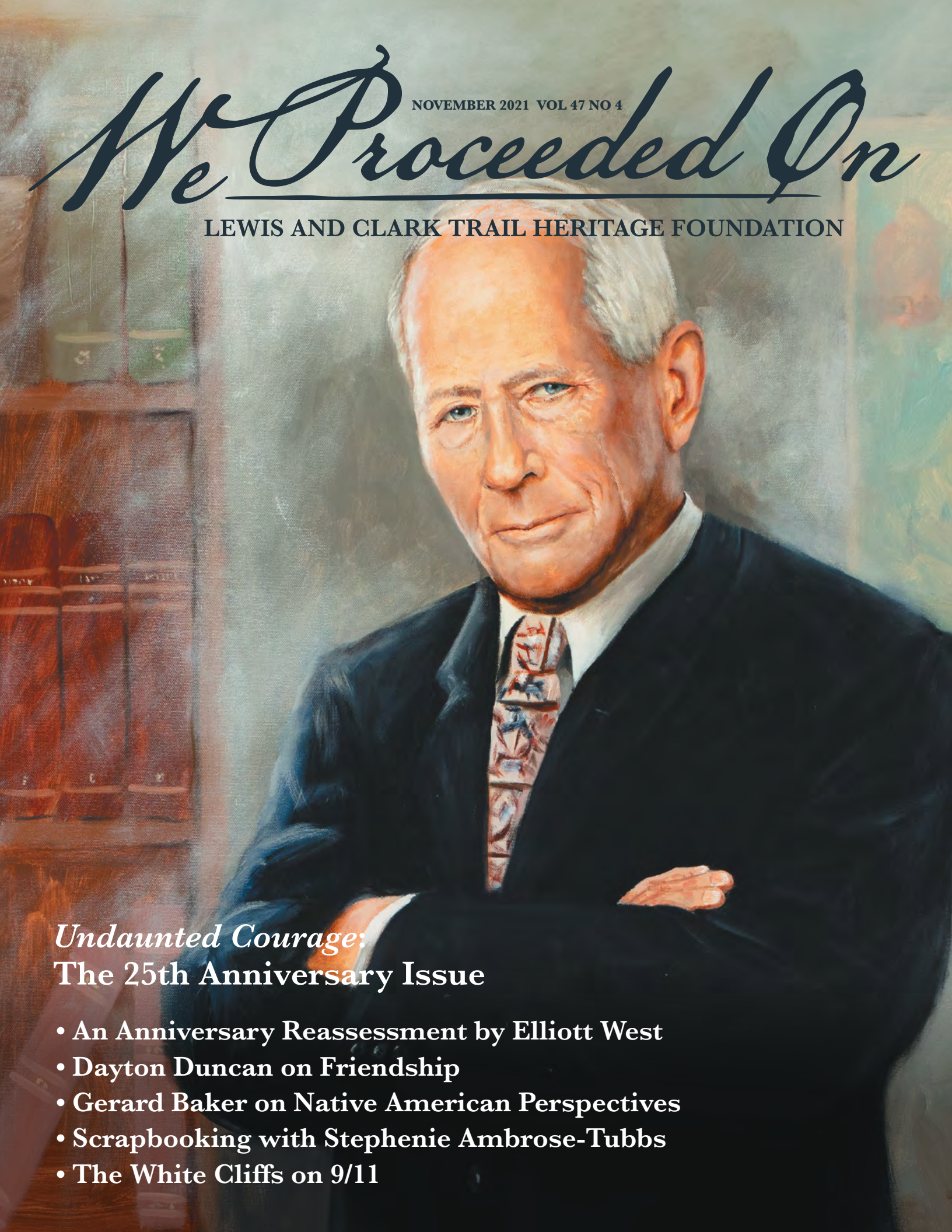
NOVEMBER 2021 VOL 47 NO 4

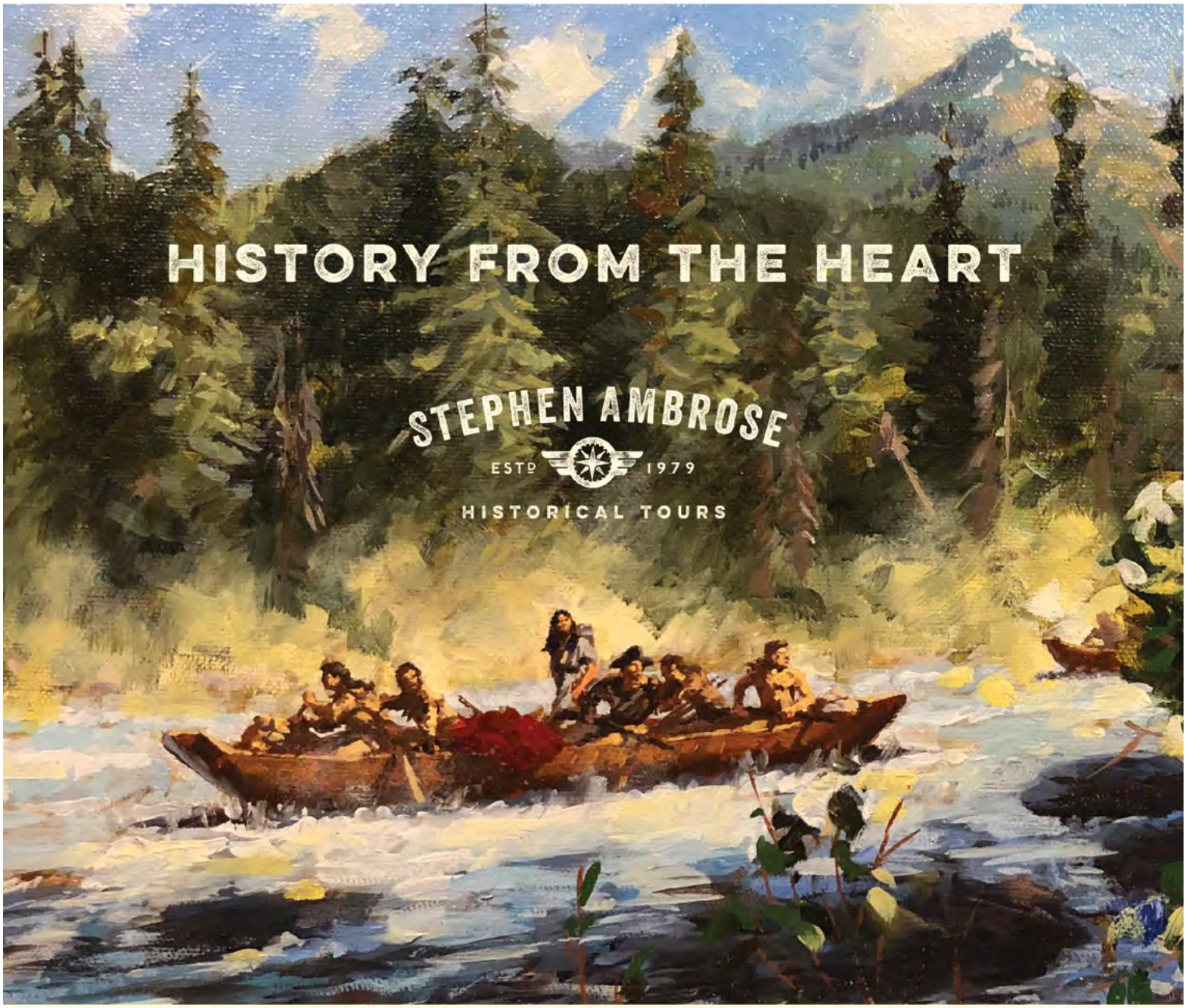
We Proceeded On

LEWIS AND CLARK TRAIL HERITAGE FOUNDATION



Undaunted Courage: The 25th Anniversary Issue

- An Anniversary Reassessment by Elliott West
- Dayton Duncan on Friendship
- Gerard Baker on Native American Perspectives
- Scrapbooking with Stephenie Ambrose-Tubbs
- The White Cliffs on 9/11



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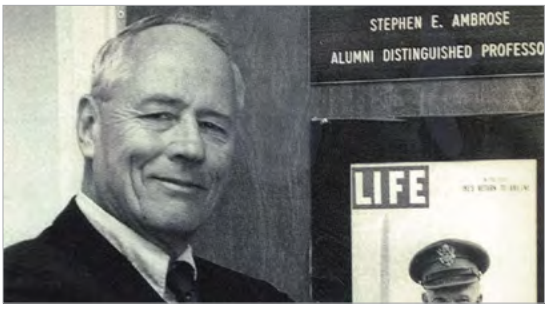

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Front cover: Painting of Stephen Ambrose by Newt Reynolds. Courtesy of the National World War II Museum, New Orleans.
Back cover: "How sublime to look down on the workhouse of Nature"—Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. Photo courtesy of Wayne Fairchild.

We Proceeded On welcomes submissions of articles, proposals, inquiries, and letters. Writer's guidelines are available by request and can be found on our website, lewisandclark.org. Submissions should be sent to Clay S. Jenkinson (701-202-6751) at editor@lewisandclark.org.

We Proceeded On

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E. G. Chuinard, M.D.,
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Assistant Editor
Catherine Jenkinson
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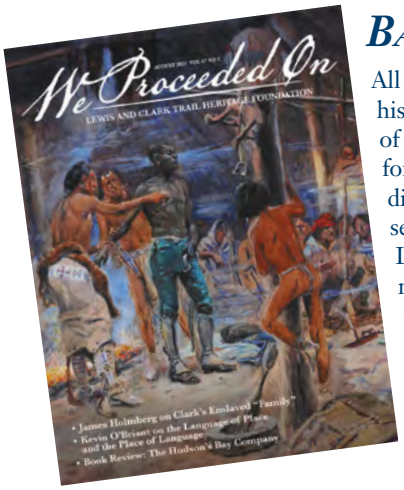

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The Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 3434, Great Falls, MT 59403
406-454-1234 / 1-888-701-3434
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www.lewisandclark.org

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As Keepers of the Story~Stewards of the Trail, the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, Inc., provides national leadership in maintaining the integrity of the Trail and its story through stewardship, scholarship, education, partnership, and cultural inclusiveness.

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A Message from the President

LCTHF President Louis Ritten

Our 53rd Annual Meeting, and our second held virtually, took place in September and was a success. Nearly 130 members attended the one-day event from the comfort of their living rooms. Our thanks go out to those who made it happen, in particular to our main presenters: LCTHF Board member and Dutch oven cooking expert Luann Waters of Oklahoma and our fourth Moulton Lecturer Dr. John Logan Allen of Wyoming. We heard reports from our Board Secretary Yvonne Kean of Kansas and Treasurer Rob Barg from Illinois. Executive Director Sarah Cawley, who grew up in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, acted as the emcee, handled the technology flawlessly, answered questions, presented our foundation awards, and even received one herself! Staffers Tori Shaw Clemmons, our Vista intern who came to us from Alabama, and Svenja Turman, our Membership and Administrative Assistant from western Germany and now living in Montana, also pitched in.

Mark Weekley, the superintendent of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail unit of the National Park Service, gave us his perspective on things from his location in Nebraska. I recapped activities from the fiscal year just ended and talked about what's coming up in the future. I was raised in Minnesota just a few miles from where Mark was, but am now a resident of Illinois and Louisiana. The attendees participated virtually from well over half the states and took advantage of several chat rooms to get to know one another better. Despite the absence of the physical touch, our virtual meeting brought folks together from all around the country and provided a bit of relief from the stress of everyday life these days.

As enjoyable as this meeting was, next year's promises to be even more fun as we gather together in person, barring unforeseen circumstances, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Taking place from August 7-10, 2022, this will be the first major LCTHF gathering held in the federally designated start of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. Please make plans to attend. On your own you may want to visit additional locations of great importance to the Lewis and Clark story farther east before or after our meeting. Perhaps a visit to see the sites in the Charlottesville, Virginia, area featured in last year's virtual annual meeting may be in order. Check out the website of our hosts at the Lewis & Clark Exploratory Center to see about visiting their facility.

Look for information about the Pittsburgh meeting in the February 2022 issue of WPO and through other LCTHF communication channels including our website lewisandclark.org and the LCTHF Facebook page. The 2023 Annual Meeting is scheduled to be held in person in the Missoula-Lolo, Montana, area and will be hosted by our friends the Travelers' Rest Connection. The exact dates have not yet been determined, so be sure to visit our website for updates.

We have begun the transition to our new membership system. Please be patient as we work out the kinks in what shows great promise toward providing a more stable foundation for our organization. Remember: to continue to receive the LCTHF's journal *We Proceeded On* in either electronic or paper format, you must actively select the option you desire when you renew your membership using the new form.

We are losing the talents of two great Board members, Barb Kubik of Washington state and Karen Goering of Missouri, both of whom have done tremendous work for LCTHF for years and who will remain active in other capacities. We are delighted that Keith Bystrom from Nebraska and Margaret Gorski of Montana will be joining the Board and look forward to the talents and drive they will bring. Please join with me in giving all of them thanks for the gifts of passion, competence, and volunteerism they contribute toward a better LCTHF.

As we approach the end of 2021, we look back at a challenging year but one with successes and great hopes for the future. Our mobile map exhibit, *Reimagining America: The Maps of Lewis and Clark*, has been a big hit and is booked through 2022 already. Go to lewisandclark.org/maps to find

out more. Our Missouri River canoe trip was a rousing success and we plan on offering it again next year. Thanks to the magnificent editorship of Clay Jenkinson and the talented authors whose work graces its pages every quarter, *We Proceeded On* has never been better. Our local groups have begun meeting in person again, while some augment their reach with virtual technology as well. Like our heroes, we are learning, adapting to circumstances, and finding ways around obstacles. Our social media presence is growing since we established an Instagram page and a YouTube channel which will both feature more and more content over time. The revamping of our educational curriculum has made great progress and we expect completion in the coming year. We anticipate a bright future in our calling to be Keepers of the Story, Stewards of the Trail.

You can make our future even brighter by lending further financial support through a donation to the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. I can assure you, any financial assistance you see fit to give will be put to good use. Although our staff does a tremendous job, our members are truly the lifeblood of LCTHF and we rely on them (you!) for leadership, ideas, energy, scholarship, promotion, monetary resources, and in many other ways. We cannot make the impact we hope to have without your support. Thank you for all you do, now and in the future.

May you enjoy a happy and healthy holiday season. Please stay safe. ∎

Proceeding on together,
Lou Ritten, President
Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

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The Journal of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation

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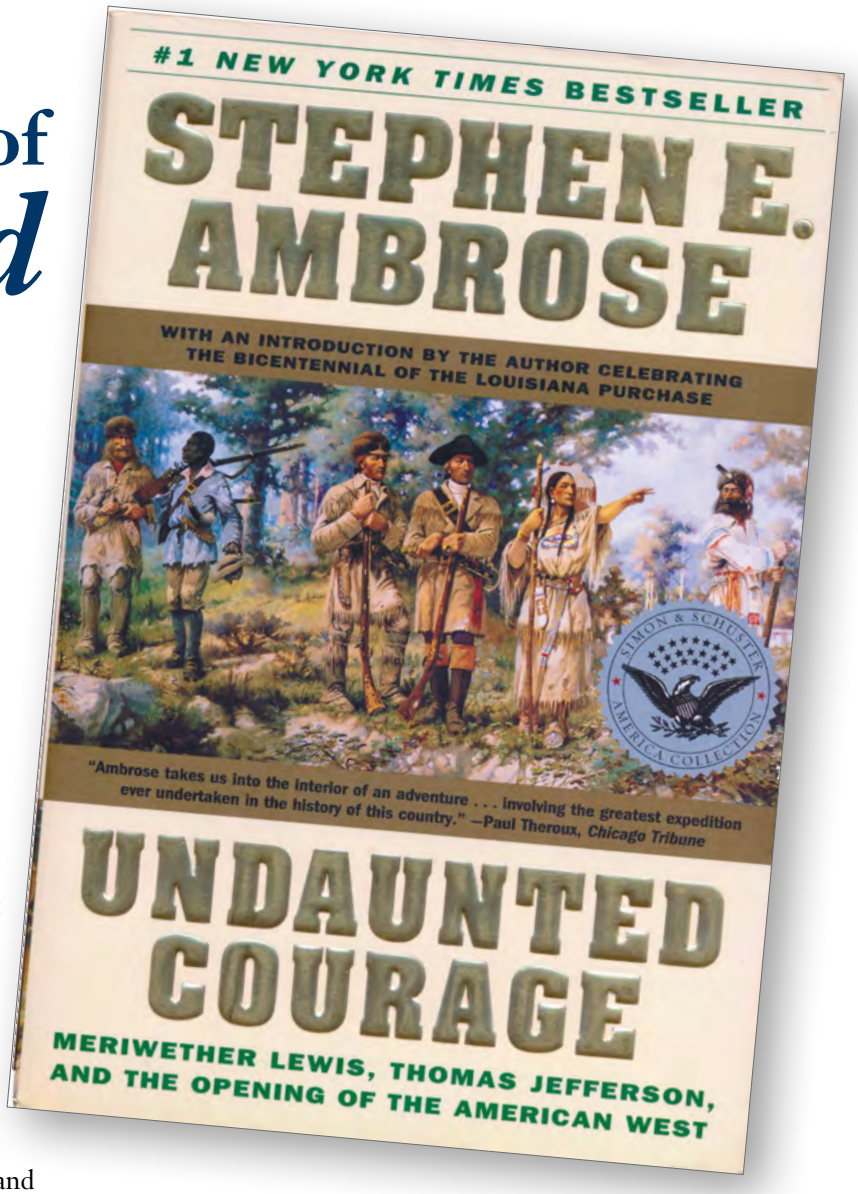
The Achievement of *Undaunted Courage:*

Re-reading the Book On Its 25th Birthday

By Elliott West



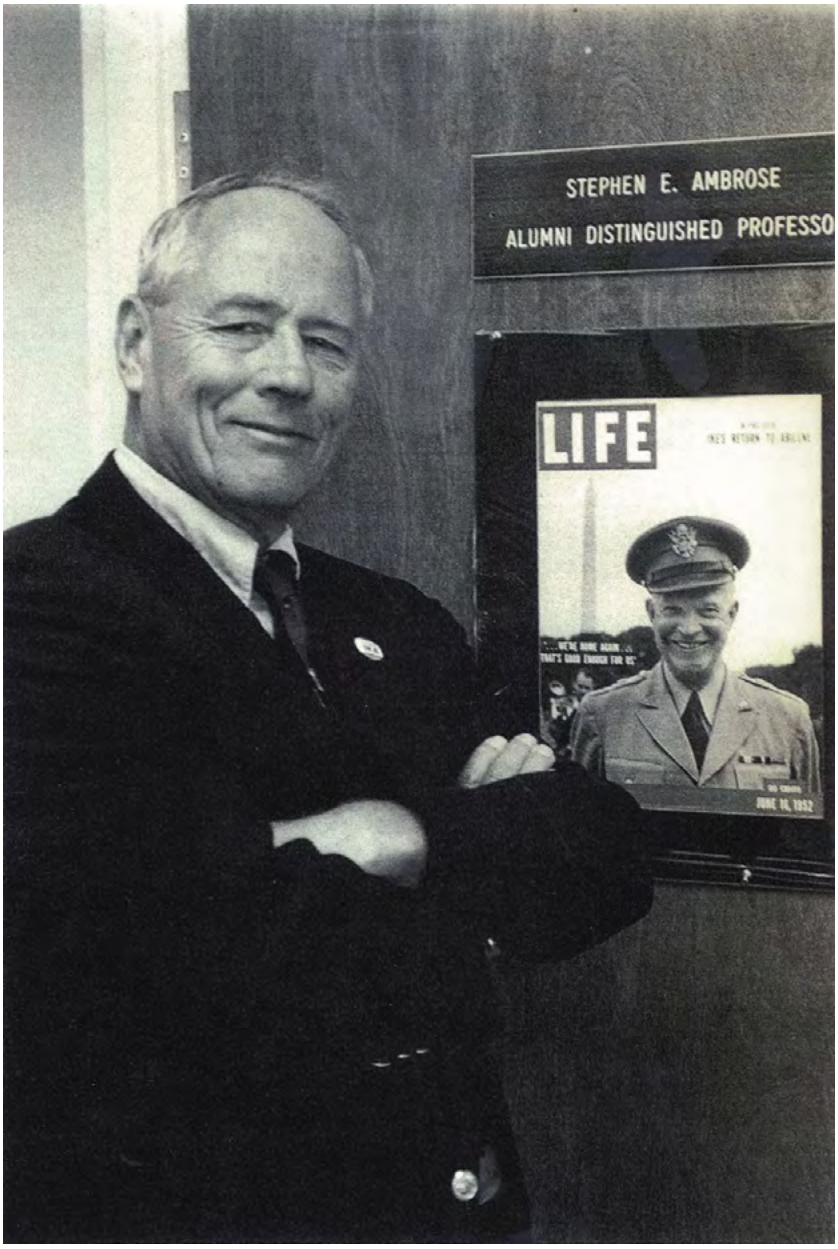
I did not have the close relationship that others in this issue of *We Proceeded On* had with Stephen Ambrose – Stephenie's intimate family tie and the close, long-term friendships of Dayton and Clay. My acquaintance was something less. For a couple of days I was his chauffer. Quite a while back he gave a talk on Eisenhower and D-Day on my home campus of the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, and I was asked to drive him to and from his hotel and a bit around town. Ambrose was less than garrulous, but we did visit a bit. *Undaunted Courage* had been out for a few years, but I was more interested in *Custer and Crazy Horse*, and as I recall, that's what we talked about.

Now the wheel has turned, as it tends to, and Clay has tasked me with considering Ambrose's best-selling biography of Meriwether Lewis, not in dialogue with the author himself but as part of a retrospective from twenty-five years out. My job is to look back from 2021 on *Undaunted Courage* as a work of scholarship. Considering any notable work after a quarter century is worthwhile, if only for the perspective of time, but the years since 1996 have also seen some remarkably vigorous work in history, anthropology, and related fields that can broaden and deepen our understanding of the story Ambrose tells so very well. My hope is to bring into the picture some of that new scholarship – as well as, it has to be said, work that was available to Ambrose when he wrote but that did not find its way into his narrative.

The strengths of *Undaunted Courage* remain obvious, starting with Ambrose's mastery of the expedition's journals, collectively an American masterpiece that is clearly his passion. He reads them shrewdly. He relates their details, mood, and gaps to everything from geography and weather to relations between the captains to Lewis' mental state (and in so doing he grapples with spelling that is eccentric even for those years before Noah Webster). For the years and months before the expedition he scours other sources to trace Lewis' intermeshed relations among long-tailed Virginia families and then his preparations and tutoring for the voyage of discovery. He follows Thomas Jefferson's frequently opaque thinking behind the expedition and its goals –although as considered below, Ambrose does this overly fixated on the northwest where Lewis would soon be traveling.

Ambrose's writing is direct and straightforward, often vivid and always engaging. He knew the tricks of keeping his reader's attention and keeping the story going. He had a

sharp eye for quotations and understood when and how to use them. He knew when to pause the action for an arresting sight. He shows us the French Canadian Louis Lorimer of Cape Girardeau and his "suit of hair" reaching nearly to the ground and kept in a braid close to his back by a "leather gerdle." The chapters are short, as are most of the paragraphs. Ambrose borrowed the dime novelist's technique of finishing a chapter on a note that all but compels the reader to turn the page to the next one. Chapter Eleven ends after the long preparation and an antsy winter of 1803-1804. The company is camped at the head of an island low on the Missouri River: "Spring storms continued, and a hard rain lasted through the night. At 6:00 a.m., May 22, they were on their way." He ends Chapter Twenty-one fifteen months later as an anxious, fatigued Lewis reaches the Continental Divide in desperate search of Shoshones and horses: "He had just been through enough experiences for an entire expedition, all in one day. He needed a good night's sleep, and lots of good luck in the morning."



Professor Ambrose enjoying the success of his biography of Dwight David Eisenhower.

Close to the heart of *Undaunted Courage*'s appeal is Ambrose's personal engagement with the expedition. As others in this issue write, he had traveled much of the route step by step, paddle stroke by paddle stroke, and in the book he communed openly with the captains and their men. He was by no means uncritical; he takes some pretty hefty swipes at both Lewis and Clark and some of their decisions. Ambrose's sympathy, however, is strong and undisguised, to the point that from time to time he slips personally into the story. Writing of members of the Corps' sipping whiskey and staring at the Missouri on the eve of departure: "They were not daunted by [the river]. Rather, they were drawn to it." Was he there? And more openly on the captains' dining at George Rogers Clark's table: "Oh! To have been able to hear the talk on the porch that afternoon, and on into the evening and through the night." The effect is to draw the reader with him, if the reader is willing to be drawn, into a story of real drama, improbable turns of fate, and fascinating characters and to experience that story from the inside, seeing it through the eyes of those who lived it.

In evaluating his book as a work of history, however, that poses a serious problem. Experiencing the book's events from the inside out necessarily blinkers us from seeing those events from a distance, from the outside in. It almost makes us forget that we need to keep those events in historical perspective. We can appreciate the compelling appeal of *Undaunted Courage*, but we can also step back for a wider look to help us see Lewis, the expedition, and this time with a fuller understanding of what was going on and where it all fit in the history of the early republic.

As a case in point, take the larger context of federal explorations and Jefferson's thinking behind them. Ambrose

takes us through the president's abiding interest in the Pacific Northwest, his hopes of reaching it and what to do with it, his concerns about England as rival, and his determination to learn just what the nation's northern border was once the Louisiana Purchase expanded the expedition's purpose. He had a good bit more on his mind, however. In a single paragraph Ambrose mentions four other expeditions under Jefferson, although he leaves one out and gets another one wrong. These were concerned with our other main rival, Spain to the southwest, and with establishing another border along another key river, the Red (although at one point Jefferson claimed, preposterously, the Rio Grande). The expedition Ambrose leaves out was that of Thomas Freeman and Peter Custis, which tried and failed to trace the Red from its mouth on the Mississippi to its headwaters. Jefferson called this one the "great expedition," and Congress funded it more generously than that of Lewis and Clark. The president's concerns with the Northwest – cultivating commerce and challenging a European rival – were at least as pressing to the Southwest. Santa Fe was an immediate and lucrative prize, and when Spain turned back Freeman and Custis with a much larger force, it showed that its barrier to American interests went well beyond the imagined possibilities suggested in Alexander Mackenzie's book, *Voyages from Montreal*, that Jefferson read in 1802. Lewis' expedition was far more than an afterthought, but at the most it had to share the president's concern, which was focused not on Oregon but on Texas and beyond.

We can step back farther and put the Corps of Discovery in a global context. Ambrose nods to the fact that this was a time when European nations were pursuing goals much like Jefferson's on other continents. Lewis and Clark's journey was an American chapter in a worldwide story of empire-making. When we set it among others elsewhere, we can see some especially revealing points about the expedition and, more than that, about national expansion and how it unfolded.

In this we have an extraordinary stroke of historian's luck. Lewis and Clark's expedition coincided precisely with another in western Africa. Mungo Park, an accomplished Scottish explorer, was sent by England to trace the course of the Niger River (within fifty miles of the length of the Missouri) from its upper reaches to its mouth. He was to make contact and to court trade with those living along it (sound familiar?). His seasoned crew of forty-four set off from the Atlantic coast "in the highest spirits" on April 6, 1805, the day before the Corps left the Mandans "in excellent health and sperits [sic]." Park kept a daily journal that we can set beside those of the captains to follow the simultaneous histories of the two expeditions. As the Corps paddled up the Missouri, found their way over the divide, struggled over Lolo Pass, and started down the Snake and Columbia, Park and his men crossed overland to the upper Niger and began the trip down the river. Like Lewis, Park dealt with sticky-fingered locals. The Corps worried about grizzlies and suffered mosquitoes; Park's men faced lions, jackals, killer bees, and crocodiles, one of which nearly ate their guide.

The starkest threat was invisible. As the Corps suffered fatigue and stomach ailments and lost one man probably to a ruptured appendix, much more serious tropical fevers devastated Park's command. Delirious men wandered into the jungle and never returned. Some died in camp and were dragged into the brush and eaten by jackals. Less than a third of the way down the Niger, only Park and four others remained. They built a jerry-rigged boat to float the rest of the way, but at some point downstream, probably about when the Corps left Fort Clatsop for home, they hung up on some rocks as local villagers hurled spears from the banks. The five explorers locked arms, stepped into the Niger, and drowned.

Eldon Chuinard titled his 1979 medical history of the Lewis and Clark Expedition *Only One Man Died*. The equivalent for Park's expedition might have been *Nobody Made It*. The difference was not the fault of Park, who was a fine and courageous leader, or of his men, and certainly the contrast should in no way diminish our respect for the captains and their gifts. Ambrose properly praises their remarkable skills as seat-of-the-pants geographers and doctors and, especially, their abilities as leaders, earning the respect and trust of the Corps and forging them into an efficient and responsive command. Rather, when we set the two stories side-by-side, we see how emerging empires, including ours, were shaped fundamentally by forces and factors beyond the virtues or faults of the individuals at work on the ground.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition was no walk in the park. But if Mungo Park could speak from his watery grave, he might point out that they enjoyed not just their legendary luck, as when they stumbled upon Sacagawea's brother just when they needed help and horses. They benefited far more from where they found themselves in the global geography of death. They were far north of the tropical killing fields that destroyed Park's expedition, that had kept European

colonizers out of the African interior for three centuries, and that would do so for another seven decades. By contrast, in taking command of North America, Europeans and then Americans were unwittingly aided by their own diseases they brought with them, from measles and cholera to smallpox, whooping cough, influenza, and many others. The Corps could see the early stages of this biological "advantage" in the West. In October 1804 they passed villages along the Missouri abandoned after being ravaged by the first wave of smallpox in 1780-1781.

As long as we are considering how the expedition and Ambrose's story fit within national ambitions and international empire-making, we might also situate them within other evolving networks of power and ambition – those of Native peoples in the country the Corps crossed. Ambrose certainly recognizes the arrangements of power among the tribes, drawing heavily on the pioneering work of James Ronda, but it is a perspective mostly in the background. It deserves more attention, in part because the topic has gotten a particularly close look from historians in the last twenty or so years.

Doing that should begin by picturing the country they crossed in terms of Native geopolitics. A map of the plains, Rockies, and Pacific Northwest would be sliced into areas of tribal power – some dominant, some subservient, some in between. The areas often overlapped at the edges, and their borders could shift and abrade. There were also places that essentially did not fit at all. These areas were bordered by powerful tribes or coalitions. They were desired by all, usually because of abundant game and other resources, but were controlled by none. There were no permanent occupations in these areas. Rather, they were visited by hunting parties ready to fight any rivals they met. Such areas are called "contested zones" or "neutral zones." Kentucky was such a place in the East, contested by the Shawnees and others to the north and by the Cherokees to the south.

It seems likely that the upper Missouri was a contested zone in 1805-1806. From the Mandan villages to their meeting with Cameahwait, the Corps saw not a single Native American (although surely they were seen) and marveled, as Lewis wrote, at "immence herds of Buffaloe, Elk, deer, & Antelopes." It seemed Edenic, which is exactly what Daniel Boone thought of game-rich, Indian-free Kentucky. As we look back, however, and leaning on important historical and anthropological work of the last few decades, we probably should see this country not as a place outside of history but a product of Native *realpolitik*. As Lewis and Clark were negotiating with the Shoshones, this was the country the Shoshones were itching to get into early in the hunting season, worried about meeting allies to stand against the gun-rich Blackfeet. A contested zone, indeed. Lewis was a very intelligent man, and he recognized that Cameahwait was unwilling to jeopardize the Shoshones' critically important foray onto the Montana plains to secure a winter's supply of bison meat and material, but the visiting army officer could not fully comprehend the Native geopolitical situation that made his Shoshone host so anxious. Lewis was feeling his way through a very complex set of intertribal dynamics. Today's historians have the responsibility of providing the fuller context that Lewis was groping to comprehend.

As the Shoshones knew, the Blackfeet were a force to be reckoned with, but the Lakotas, or Teton Sioux, were the real powerhouse. To see how they got there, we have a remarkable recent work by Pekka Hämäläinen, author of an earlier similar history of the rise of the Comanche empire to the south. *Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power* was published in 2019 and reviewed in these pages.

Hämäläinen follows the Lakotas' history from their tangled relations with the French and British in Minnesota, through expansion to the Missouri valley, then onto the plains where they developed a horseback empire and largely controlled the increasingly lucrative trade that ran from the Southwest into British Canada. What we see here are the rise and expansion of an economic and military power in midcontinent that was reaching its peak when it met another young expansionist power with its own hungry commercial interests, the United States, represented here by its point men Lewis and Clark.

In one of his most vividly written episodes of *Undaunted Courage*, Ambrose takes us into that famous confrontation with the Tetons that might have ended the expedition then and there. It is a dramatic zoom shot of action – mutual posturing, all-night dancing, negotiations, confrontation and standoff, and a climactic, cinematic moment of disaster averted. High drama. But to fully appreciate what was happening we need to understand that the captains, with their medals and air gun and naïve overtures, were intruding into a dynamic military and economic arrangement and were challenging its dominant power, the Tetons, on their own turf, announcing that they would be making their own bid for the trade and loyalty of those like the Mandans and Arikaras who were currently the Tetons' vassals. No wonder the Tetons grabbed their tow rope. James Ronda's view that the

Lakota leader Black Buffalo was the best leader in the nearly weeklong confrontation must offset earlier Eurocentric and triumphalist readings of the confrontation.

No wonder the Mandans greeted the Corps so warmly. Here at the least were alternative markets they could play against the bully boys downriver and the British, whose agents were already in their villages when Lewis and Clark arrived. With this network of power in mind, we can see more freshly other aspects of the expedition. The Nez Perce, the Nimiipuu, also embraced the Americans so firmly because they saw in them the chance to acquire firearms.

They saved Lewis and Clark's men after the expedition's Bitterroots ordeal in late September 1805, patched them up and put them back on the road, helped them hollow out canoes that would stay upright on the Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia rivers, agreed to take care of the expedition's horses over the winter, and sent a couple of their savviest men to guide Lewis and Clark through the tribally complicated corridor of the Columbia.

The captains understood that in negotiations, as when seeking a guide eastward over Lolo Pass, guns were the ultimate coin of the realm. In the weave of trade relationships, their rivals to the east like the Blackfeet had guns in abundance from trade with the British, and the Nez Perce were desperate for their own to even out the imbalance. They got their first half dozen when three young men made an audacious journey through hostile country to the Hidatsa villages in the spring of 1806 where they learned that a strange bunch of white men had wintered there before heading upriver in hopes of peaceful trade with western tribes.

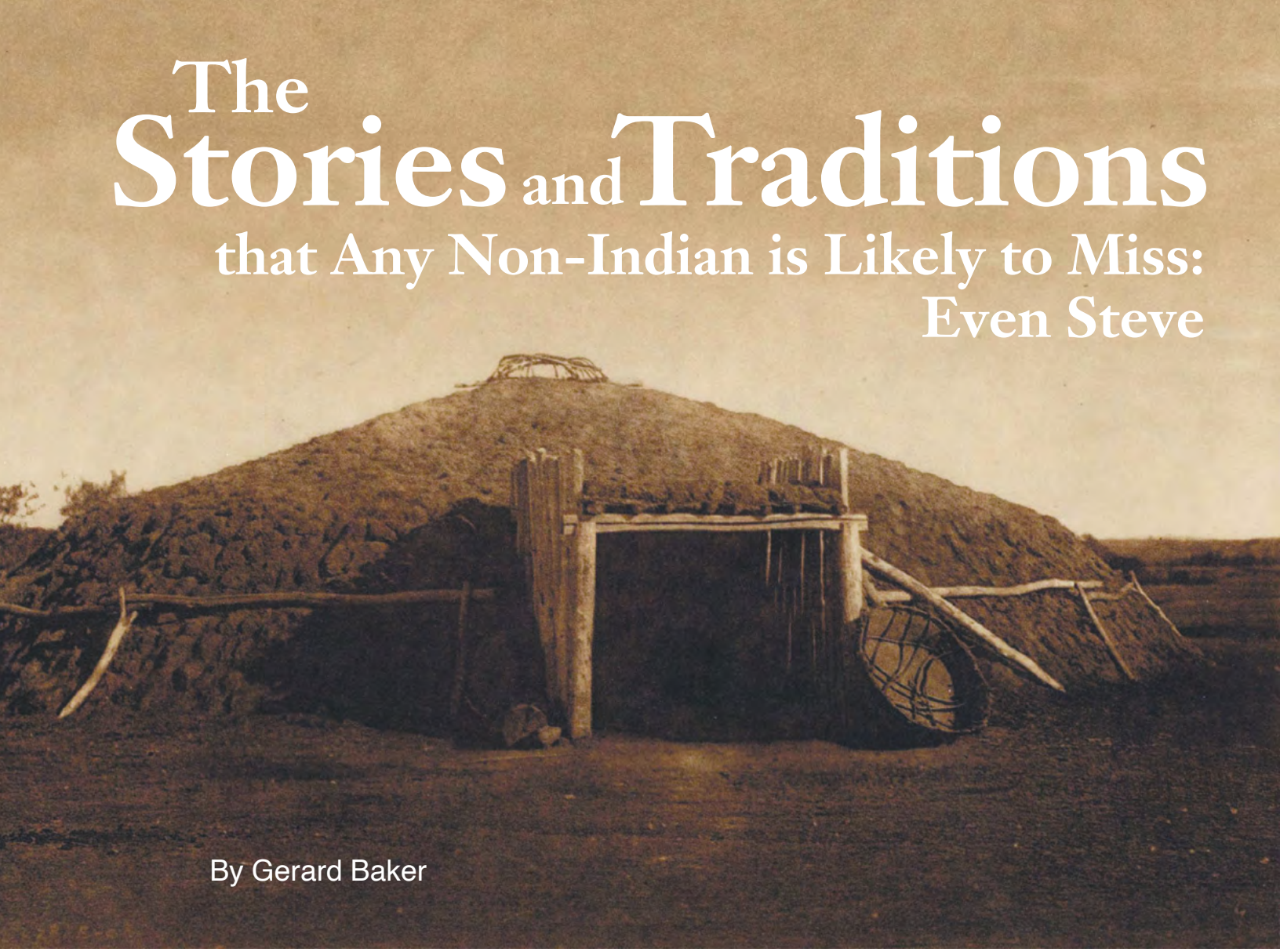
In the spring of 1806, the Nez Perce formed a formal alliance with the bearded Americans, kept punctiliously by them until the catastrophe of the 1877 Nez Perce War. According to Nez Perce tradition, the Nimiipuu sealed their alliance with the Americans by the sexual bonding between Clark and the sister of the prominent Red Grizzly Bear. The result was a son, Halahtookit (Daytime Smoke). As an old man he would leave his homeland with Chief Joseph's resisters in 1877 and die in exile in Indian Territory. With this alliance the Nez Perce hoped for both trade, including precious firearms, and safer access to the contested zone of the upper Missouri should the Americans come through on their promise of forging a peace with the dreaded Blackfeet. That, clearly, did not work out, which puts Lewis' nasty clash with eight young Piegan men on the Marias in a larger and revealing diplomatic context.

There is so much more to learn about the expedition by listening to the wealth of Native memories and traditions gathered since publication of *Undaunted Courage*. The obvious starting point is the Tribal Legacy Project of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, a truly extraordinary resource of Indian testimony about the expedition and, far more than that, about tribal cultures, lifeways, and histories. Listen to the scores of voices – a Palouse blessing song, stories of Shoshones and their horses, Osage sign language, what an Arikara village looked like, Chinook baskets and canoe paddles – and it could not be clearer that the story that Ambrose tells so compellingly in the end was one fascinating episode within a rich history centuries deep, ever more interesting as we add more lenses to a story we thought we knew so well. Follow it with an eye to Native diplomacy and we see a continental grappling of two rising powers. Shift your vision a bit and you see one of them, the adolescent republic, with ambitions stretching from the Columbia to the Rio Grande. Pull back to a global view, take in paired stories like those of Lewis and Park, and you will get a sense of the advantages that would carry the restless Americans to the Pacific forty years after the captains and the Corps completed their journey.

That journey is at once a fascinating story, simply as story, and also one of the more revealing events of the early republic. *Undaunted Courage* is and will remain an essential work for anyone drawn into that story, and when we use it as an encouragement to explore its wider contexts and meanings, we can learn plenty. As historians explore it yet further, we can count on this compelling story to earn for us a still fuller understanding of this critical time of our past. ∎

Elliott West, Alumni Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Arkansas, specializes in the history of the American West, environmental history, and the history of American Indians. He is the author of eight books. The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers and ,the Rush to Colorado *(1998) won several national awards, including the Francis Parkman Prize for the year's outstanding book in American history, and it and* The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story *(2009), both received the Western History Association's award as the book of the year. In 2017-2018 he was the Harmsworth Visiting Professor of History at the University of Oxford. He lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas, with his wife, the Reverend Suzanne Stoner.*

The Stories and Traditions that Any Non-Indian is Likely to Miss: Even Steve



By Gerard Baker

Photograph of Mandan earthlodge by Edward S. Curtis.

Undaunted Courage by the late Stephen Ambrose was a great book on the journey of Lewis and Clark. He obtained most of the information directly from the journals of the expedition, and added to it his knowledge of most of the tribes that Lewis and Clark either met or whose territory they crossed. Mr. Ambrose describes several challenges throughout the book that I feel may have made an impact on understanding the journals. In the instance of interpreters who were utilized during the expedition, he points out that the statements made by the tribal folks had to go through some if not many interpreters. This fact is important when we read their attempt to interact with and to understand the tribes. I see Ambrose's book as a great introduction to the West and all it stood for, and an introduction of the land and tribes of the Missouri-Columbia watersheds, but its focus was Lewis and Clark. If Stephen were to expand on the contents, I think we would have "several" volumes to read.

Regarding the tribal landscapes and people, I would think there were many, many stories that were not told for a number of reasons, including one that comes to mind. When I was a young boy growing up on our cattle ranch on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in west- central North Dakota, I and my siblings would hear many stories – stories of the creation of our tribes, both the Mandan and Hidatsa sides, as my father was primarily Mandan (including that being his first language) and my mother Hidatsa. My mother would especially remind me not to say anything to the non-Indians as she felt they would laugh and make fun of us. As a result, for years as an Interpreter in the National Park Service I was reluctant to say as much as I probably should have to make

what I was saying more understandable for the non-Indian listener. Turning that thought back to the many tribes the Lewis and Clark Expedition visited, it would have been nearly impossible for Lewis and Clark not only to hear it all, but to have had time to record what they learned. They were after all a military expedition.

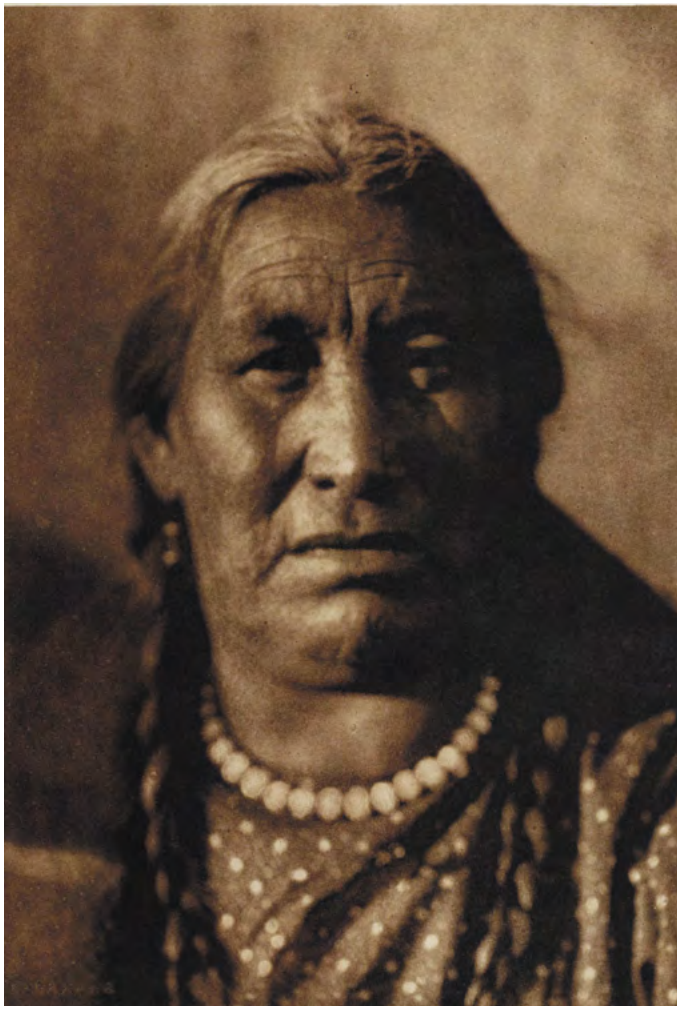
I believe Stephen would have studied all of that given the opportunity or if he were writing his great book today. A deeper study I feel would shed light on the attitude of the non-Indians who came into this land, an attitude many believe started with Lewis and Clark. The attitude that has always bothered me when I read in detail the early journals and government documents of Lewis and Clark and others is that white people were superior. I believe the tribes to be at a disadvantage in these reports. One key distinction is the tribal belief in living with the land and everything on it, compared with the desire to conquer the land, expressed by the many people coming to Indian Country before and after Lewis and Clark.

The government and even the early churches did not try to understand the tribes and their way of life. The Mandan-Hidatsa, for example, had already experienced a devastating smallpox epidemic in 1781 that was still being talked about when Lewis and Clark showed up twenty-three years later. The outside world did not really understand what was lost during events like that. Not only were people of all ages affected and hundreds, even thousands dead suddenly from a malady they could not understand, but the medicine and knowledge held by many elders were lost forever. Many medicine bundles and the rites of these bundles were lost, although at least some were incorporated into new bundles. All of this had a lasting effect on not only the Missouri River valley tribes, but I am sure on every tribe that came into contact with the smallpox.

For all of his good scholarship and good will, Stephen Ambrose was unable to penetrate the innermost realm of the sacred. But it is impossible to understand Native Americans without this knowledge and wisdom.

I mention the bundles because these were a central part of the life of these tribes. Many were brought to the Mandan-Hidatsa during the Creation Time, as I am sure other tribes had similar experiences with their sacred objects. They were so sacred that I am very sure that many if not all of the most important ones were not mentioned to Lewis

Edwin Benson of the Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara Nation in full regalia. Benson was the last fully-fluent speaker of the Mandan language. Photo courtesy of Minot State University, North Dakota.



Scattered Corn of the Mandan-Hidatsa Nation. Photograph by Edward S. Curts.

and Clark. All of this goes back to the attitude of the non-Indians, who I am sure thought the tribal folks a bit backward and not having a very sophisticated way of life. One element missing that is not discussed too much is the lack of information on the women of the tribe and their way of life. It almost seemed that non-Indians considered the women as being unimportant. Many tribes including the Mandan-Hidatsa were matrilineal, but the women stayed in the background making decisions. This made it harder for non-Indians to recognize their importance. The Native males were always taught to highly respect the women as they represented the backbone of the tribes.

In the Mandan-Hidatsa world, and among most other tribes, all beliefs coming from creation included all living things. The non-Indians brought in their idea of Christianity and simply could not understand the thought process when it came to respecting all the spirits of nature and what the various players in creation gave the tribes to exist. This again I believe was not talked about due to the fact that if outsiders did not respect this medicine, sometimes the "bad" would come back to the Native family in a way that would hurt the individual or his family members.

Had Lewis and Clark talked with the women of the tribe and maybe other tribes as well they would have gained much insight into the world of the Mandan-Hidatsa. As it was, as Ambrose pointed out, someone's "information" would go through many interpreters, I believe changing the root of the statement sometimes. One example is the story of Sacagawea or Maeshuwea (Eagle Women), as we Hidatsa know her and the fact that she was actually Crow-Hidatsa. The case for this view of Sacagawea has now been compiled into an important new book that I invite all of you to read and study, *Our Story of Eagle Woman – Sacagawea: They Got It Wrong*, published in the fall of 2021 by the Sacagawea Project Board of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation.

This book opens the door to many ways of thinking and facts that Stephen simply did not consider or incorporate, due to the lack of time and size of the publication, I am sure. We need to look at *Undaunted Courage* by Stephen Ambrose as a great introduction to this most exciting story of the tribes met by the Lewis and Clark party and as a gateway to more research on all the tribes along this trail. Accomplishing this would produce more understanding among all peoples. ∎

Dr. Gerard A. Baker is a full-blood member of the Mandan-Hidatsa Tribe of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, Mandaree, North Dakota. He grew up on the reservation on his father's cattle ranch in western North Dakota. Baker received his Ph.D. in Public Service from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in December 2007. He is a graduate of Southern Oregon State University in Ashland, Oregon, with degrees in Criminology and Sociology. During his thirty-three-year career with the National Park Service, Baker served as the Superintendent of Mount Rushmore National Memorial and the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, among other postings. He lives near Miles City, Montana.

Friendship, the Trail, and the Great Adventure:

Exploring the West with Stephen Ambrose

By Dayton Duncan

Ambrose, Burns, and Duncan with a group of re-enactors at the height of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Photo courtesy of Dayton Duncan.

I consider my first encounter with Stephen Ambrose one of the great happenstances of my life – my personal equivalent of the fortunate coincidence that befell Lewis and Clark at Lemhi Pass, when they brought in Sacagawea to interpret for them during the crucial negotiations for horses with the Shoshones. She turned out to be the sister of Chief Cameahwait. Needless to say, this made negotiations easier. They got their horses and proceeded on.

In 1985, I was retracing the Corps of Discovery's trail for what would become my first book, *Out West*. In Fort Benton, Montana, I asked Bob Singer, who ran Missouri River Outfitters, if I could accompany one of his canoe tours through the White Cliffs to gather material for the book. I didn't have the money to pay for it, but he kindly agreed I could join an upcoming trip, in exchange for helping him and his crew. "Great," I said. "Who's in the group?"

"Some professor from New Orleans," Singer answered. That "some professor" turned out to be Steve.

At the time, I'd never heard of him. He had written nearly ten books, including a biography of Dwight D. Eisenhower, and he was deep into the work that would become a three-volume biography of Richard Nixon, but his more popular books on World War Two were still in the future. These were his academic specialties.

But what I learned from the moment we launched our canoes at Coal Banks Landing was that, like me, Steve had developed an incurable case of "Lewis-and-Clark-itis" – contracted, he said, in 1975 when he read a book about the expedition. Prior to that, he admitted, "I didn't know a thing about them. Starting at paragraph one, sentence one,

The Boys in the Bitterroots: Duncan, Burns, and Ambrose. Photo courtesy of Dayton Duncan.

I was hooked."

In the intervening years, he had spent parts of his summers along the trail. He and his family celebrated the nation's Bicentennial at Lemhi Pass on the Fourth of July 1976. He had slept in his car near Lewis' grave at Grinder's Stand in Tennessee, avoiding arrest by explaining to the policeman, "Officer, you've got to understand, I'm in love with this man." Most recently, he had read excerpts from the expedition's journals at the wedding of his daughter Stephenie to John Tubbs at the Gates of the Mountains near Helena. Stephenie and John had first met there, as teenagers, during an Ambrose family boat excursion run by John's family – another Lewis and Clark Trail coincidence that altered lives forever. Stephenie and John were part of our small flotilla that set off from Coal Banks Landing toward the White Cliffs, as was Steve's beloved wife, Moira, and Steve's best friend from college, Jim Wimmer, and Wimmer's two sons.

Our first campsite, at Stonewall Creek (Eagle Camp), was essentially the same one the expedition had used on May 31, 1805, where Lewis wrote his lyrical passage about the "seens of visionary inchantment" that had mesmerized the explorers as they passed through the White Cliffs. After dinner, Steve ordered us all to sit along the banks of the Missouri to drink in the view of a sandstone rampart, graced by the Eye of the Needle, while a rising moon began to illuminate the cliffs and the riffling waters. Then, sitting behind us, he read Lewis' lengthy journal entry. I can still hear his raspy voice caressing his hero's words of wonder as the rest of us – caught in a timeless reverie – communed with the explorers who had preceded us nearly two centuries earlier.

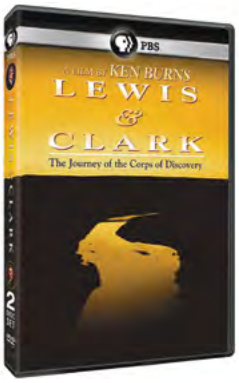
A lasting friendship began on that evening. It was cemented in the days that followed, as we floated and paddled our way to Judith Landing. Meriwether Lewis had brought us together.

We kept in touch as I worked on my book, which devoted part of a chapter to our river trip – and I take some measure of pride in having been the first to tell the world (or at least a small part of the world) about Steve and his magnificent obsession with the Lewis and Clark story, a decade before a much larger audience would learn of it.

In 1995, when I called him to say that Ken Burns and I were making a PBS documentary about Lewis and Clark, he revealed that he was just finishing a biography of Lewis. By this point, his World War Two books, *Band of Brothers* and *D-Day*, had been published and he was no longer "some professor from New Orleans." He was now a best-selling author – famous and becoming wealthy (both unusual adjectives to apply to a history professor). He told me his publisher had reluctantly agreed to let him do the Lewis book, more or less as an indulgence, so long as he promised to return to topics they knew would sell well, which most certainly did not include the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

When we interviewed him for our film in Great Falls, Steve had just finished the manuscript for *Undaunted Courage*, and both Ken and I were thrilled that so much of the story was fresh in his mind (yet another providential coincidence). It was as if we could simply say, "May 30th, 1805," and he'd jump in to answer, "Oh, those boys were working hard, dragging those boats and canoes, fighting that Missouri's current; the water was cold and they must have been thinking, 'Will this river *ever* have an end?'" We had the sense that Steve had actually been there with them. When the interview was over, he handed me a copy of his manuscript to take home and look over for comments.

The next year (1996), *Undaunted Courage* hit the bookstores. To Simon & Schuster's utter amazement, it leaped to the *New York Times* best-seller list. It would remain there for 126 weeks and become Steve's most popular single book.



Ambrose was one of the principal "talking heads" in Ken Burns' Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery.

Our documentary, *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*, was ready for national broadcast in 1997, and to promote it, Steve joined Ken and me, accompanied by reporters and television crews, at different locales along the expedition trail. We visited the replica of the keelboat in St. Charles, Missouri, and the reconstruction of Fort Mandan in North Dakota; helped re-enactors in Great Falls, Montana, portage a heavy canoe; traveled a day on horseback over the Lolo Trail in Idaho; paddled a dugout canoe down a stretch of the Clearwater River to Lewiston, Idaho, and Clarkston, Washington, for a screening of film clips at an outdoor festival; and showed a segment of the film to the annual meeting of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation at Stevenson, Washington. After a special screening at Fort Clatsop in Astoria, Oregon, we cancelled our hotel rooms when we were invited to spend the night with some of the National Park Service staff in the reconstructed fort. Steve, of course, read from the journals, and then kept many of us – particularly Moira – awake through the night with his snoring.

In the East Room of the White House – Lewis' makeshift bedroom when he worked as President Thomas Jefferson's assistant – President William Jefferson Clinton welcomed us for a preview screening. At the reception

Ambrose explains his historical fascination with Lewis and Clark on the Charlie Rose *program, February 23, 1996.*

afterward, Steve, Ken, and I took the opportunity to lobby Clinton about providing the White Cliffs with better federal protection and posthumously making Clark an *official* captain of the expedition.

When the documentary was finally broadcast on November 4-5, 1997, PBS got the same kind of shocking surprise that had struck Simon & Schuster a year earlier. Our film achieved the second-highest ratings (after Ken's *The Civil War*) in the network's history. "Lewis-and-Clark-itis" had become an epidemic. My friend Stephen Ambrose can be considered Patient Zero.

As the expedition's Bicentennial approached, Steve and I met often along the trail. He was now a national celebrity, and he used his prominence to urge anyone who would listen that plans needed to be made to assure the historical anniversary would be appropriately commemorated. What impressed me the most was the way he leveraged not only his fame but also his new-found prosperity to the cause of preserving the story of American history. For a while, he helped keep the National Council for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial financially afloat. All along the expedition's route, I learned of his generous donations to small organizations struggling to build interpretive centers or preserve a small parcel of land. He joined the board of American Rivers, a conservation group working to restore the Missouri River to something a little closer to what the Corps of Discovery had encountered. Our families spent the Fourth of July 1998 together in Great Falls, taking part in the dedication of the new U.S. Forest Service Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center there.

Steve had also begun his effort to build the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans. To raise money for it, he would invite prospective donors to join him for a week immersed in the Lewis and Clark story: floating through the White Cliffs, visiting the Great Falls and Three Forks of the Missouri, ascending Lemhi Pass, and riding horses over the Lolo Trail.

Besides myself, Steve brought Gary Moulton, John Logan Allen, and archaeologist Ken Karsmizki along to provide commentary and interpretation. Steve, of course, read from the journals every morning and evening. His son Hugh served as the trail boss for what turned out to be the most elaborate and memorable camping trip of my life. Gourmet dinners – catered by his son Barry and daughter-in-law Celeste – awaited us at many stops. Fine wines were served. We drank whiskey at the place where the Corps of Discovery

The Three Amigos at Orofino, Idaho, imagining how they might hollow out a canoe. Photo courtesy of Dayton Duncan.

had depleted their supply. Wallets were opened and checks were written – not just for the D-Day museum but for some Lewis and Clark causes as well.

In 2000, Steve and I found ourselves at Coal Banks Landing once more. This time, it was to accompany Bruce Babbitt, the Secretary of the Interior, who was considering recommending to President Clinton that the White Cliffs section of the Missouri be declared a national monument. Before heading downriver with Babbitt, Steve and I told the reporters gathered there that this was a special place in the American landscape, a unique combination of scenic beauty and historical significance, worthy of – and badly in need of – greater protection. We even suggested that national monument status might not be enough; it should be made a White Cliffs National Park. Steve later called me from his home in Helena, jokingly complaining that, by returning to my home in New Hampshire, I had escaped the vehement uproar in Montana opposed to such a notion, which was now directed solely at him.

But in January 2001, we were back in the East Room of the White House, for the last official event of the Clinton presidency. William Clark was belatedly promoted to captain. Sacagawea and York were named as honorary sergeants in the Corps of Discovery. And invoking the same Antiquities Act Theodore Roosevelt had used to save the Grand Canyon, Devils Tower, and other special places, with a stroke of his pen Clinton declared the White Cliffs and Pompeys Pillar as national monuments. As part of the ceremony, Steve quoted from Lewis' journal from the presidential podium with the same passion I had become accustomed to around campfires, and later he was given the pen Clinton used to make the military promotions. I was honored to receive the pen that created the new national monuments. Afterward, we chatted about the upcoming Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial and the hopes that our families could canoe through the White Cliffs in the near future. But it was the last time we saw each other in person. Cancer took him away a year later, at age 66.

During the long commemoration of the expedition's Bicentennial – at events in 2003 to 2006 that ranged from Monticello to Louisville, from Independence Creek in Kansas to Astoria, Oregon – whenever I was asked to be the speaker, I always understood it was because Steve wasn't available. Oh, how he would have loved to be there, quoting from the journals, talking about the adventures and accomplishments of Lewis and Clark, and being part of a national remembrance

of an epic American story that he had played such a pivotal role in bringing to the attention of so many people.

At the final event, in St. Louis, the replica of the keelboat came down the Mississippi, fired the cannon on its bow, and landed near the Gateway Arch. The members of the reconstituted Corps of Discovery disembarked, and the crowd raised a hearty three cheers for their safe return.

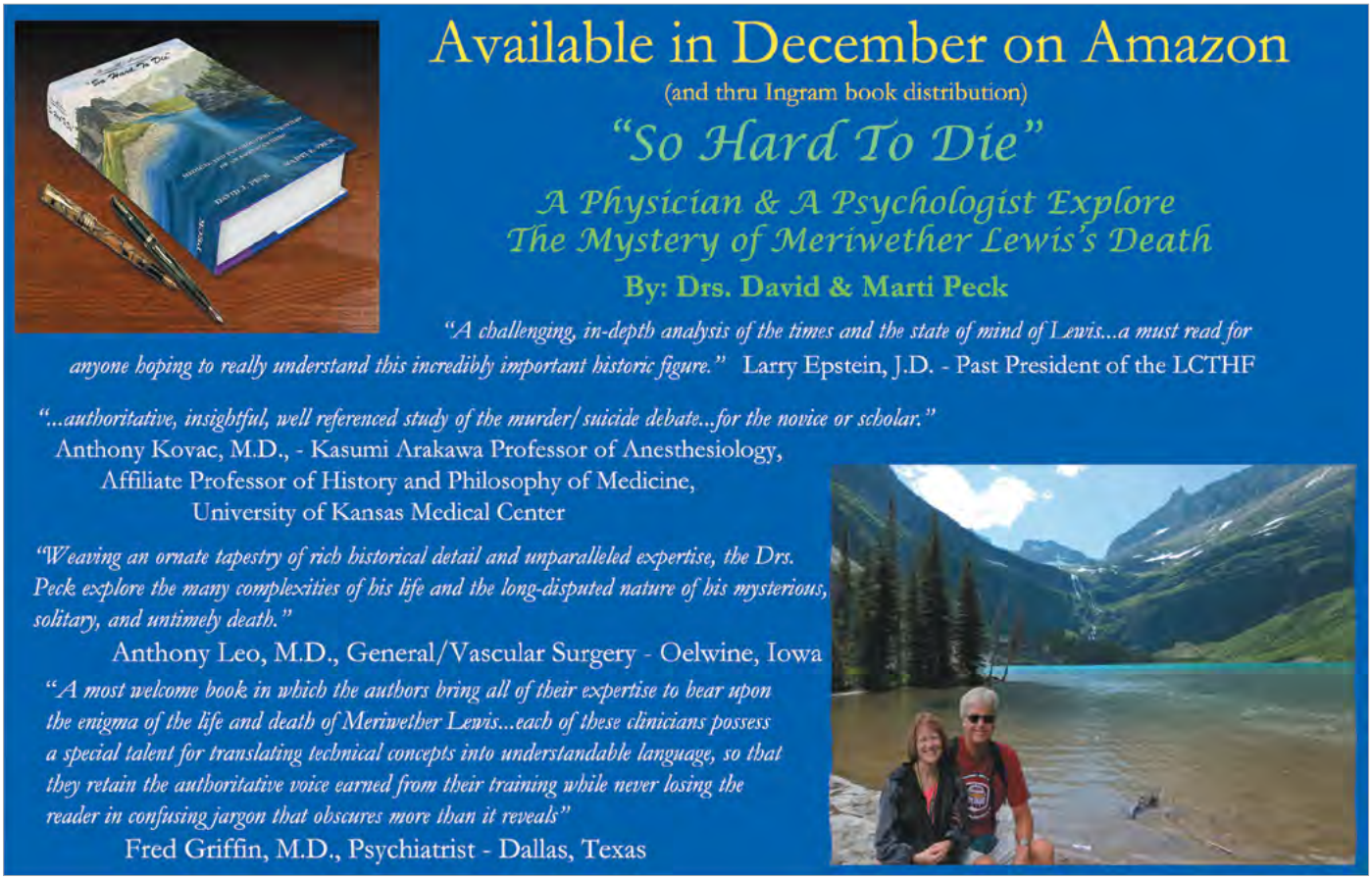
Standing there with Moira and Stephenie, I said how much I wished Steve could be there with us. Moira smiled, knowingly, and answered: "He *is* here."

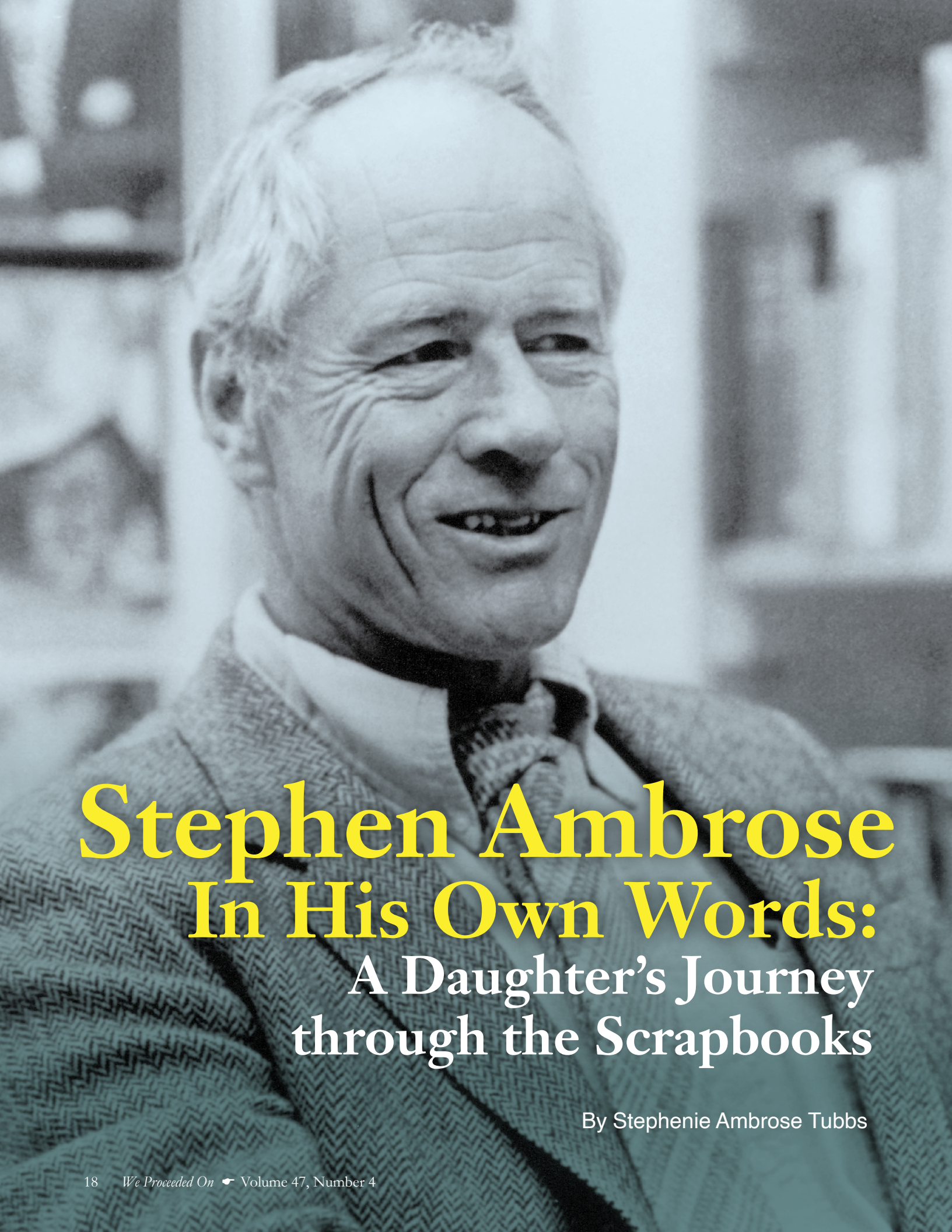
I take that thought with me now each time I return to a portion of the Lewis and Clark Trail – particularly through the White Cliffs. Following his example, I sometimes accompany groups of potential donors for the Conservation Lands Foundation, which helps support the many Friends groups of national monuments, including the Friends of the Missouri Breaks National Monument.

When we camp at Stonewall Creek, I ask everyone to sit down near the river, facing across the water to the cliffs that now have more permanent protection, while I read from Lewis' journal. When I get to the part where Lewis wrote, "As we passed on it seemed as if those seens of visionary inchantment would never have an end," I'm heartened that perhaps those scenes will still be there for future generations who might also decide to follow in the expedition's footsteps, perhaps inspired by *Undaunted Courage*, which after twenty-five years still remains the most likely infection point for "Lewis-and-Clark-itis."

As I do my reading on the banks of the Missouri River, I notice that my voice has also gotten raspy over the years. But it's not Steve's voice. It's his voice I hear. ∎

Dayton Duncan is an award-winning writer and filmmaker. He is the author of thirteen books, including three about the Lewis and Clark Expedition: Out West *(1987);* Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery *(1997); and* Scenes of Visionary Enchantment: Reflections on Lewis and Clark *(2004). For thirty years he has collaborated with Ken Burns as a writer and producer of documentaries for PBS, including a four-hour film about the Corps of Discovery (1997), which achieved the second-highest ratings in PBS history. He has served on the Board of the National Parks Foundation, the Student Conservation Association, and the Conservation Lands Foundation.*





Stephen Ambrose In His Own Words:

A Daughter's Journey through the Scrapbooks

By Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs

Looking back to twenty-five years ago and the years we traipsed around the West following the expedition is bittersweet for me. Going through the interviews and gathering the photographs spark countless memories. I cannot help but smile at some of his particularly Ambrosian observations.

From his final book *To America*, published in 2002, which my brother Hugh called "his love song to America which he sang his whole life,"

"Moira and I owe so much to those who have shared the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of the trail with us, but most of all to our children and grandchildren whose enthusiasm never flags. They have followed us in the footsteps of Crazy Horse and Custer, Lewis and Clark, in the best years of our lives. Without our children there would be no book on the Lewis and Clark Trail. It is our dream that someday they will be taking their grandchildren on horseback over the Lolo or by canoe down the Missouri or camping at Lemhi on the Fourth of July, and that for them it be as it has been for us, the greatest experience of all, one that draws their families together as it has ours."

Forty weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list for non-fiction, when historian Alvin Josephy reviewed *Undaunted Courage* in the *New York Times* on March 10, 1996, he said it "read like a novel." I find many examples of readers and reviewers who thought *Undaunted Courage* actually was a novel. Several local booksellers have told me over the years that, when people come in asking for it, they call it "the journal" or the "bible" of Lewis and Clark. We recently listened to it while driving across the Northern Great Plains. It never fails to make the miles roll by more quickly, and to make me appreciate what a worthy gift it is to readers of biographies. Like many, I hadn't re-read *Undaunted Courage* in decades, but I am proud to say it stands the test of time and of re-reading. Like all truly great stories, it remains timeless. Listening to it while driving along the Yellowstone River, I can hear my father's voice loud and clear even if the unabridged version is not read by him.

On his inspiration to become a historian and writer, he recalled the words of his University of Wisconsin history professor William Hesseltine who instructed, "In this course you are not going to do a paper regurgitating what you have learned. You are going to add to the sum of the world's knowledge."

In early July of 1996, *People Magazine* quoted my father as using a William Clark turn of phrase regarding the success of his biography of Lewis, "It's wonderful. I am sitting in the clover." In the same article he mentioned, "The single thing I most wanted was to enlarge the circle of those who sit around the campfire with Lewis and Clark." There is no question that he accomplished that goal.

Over the years I recall his saying several times that he attributed the success of *Undaunted Courage* to female readers who bought the book for male relatives. He thought it was as simple as that.

University of New Orleans *Legacy Magazine*, May 1984:

"What I enjoy most is taking 19- and 20-year old's who are willing to work and telling them about the history of their country, informing them about their own past, making them, I hope, and it sounds terribly pretentious, but it really is what I try to do, into better citizens so that when they go into the voting polls, they'll have a basis for making their judgements."

"My wife and I had talked for quite a while about what we wanted to do for our [America's] 200th birthday. It had to be something better than watching fireworks."

OUTWARD BOUND Historian Stephen Ambrose traces Lewis and Clark's trail and comes back with a surprise bestseller 1996

A "It's the camping expedition of all time," says Ambrose (with wife Moira in Meriwether Canyon) of Lewis and Clark's journey.

HIKING A PRISTINE STRETCH OF the Lewis and Clark trail along Montana's rugged Missouri River breaks—part of a summer journey he has made for the last 20 years—historian Stephen Ambrose is transported to another time. "You don't see power lines," he marvels. "You don't see bridges or ranches. You see what the explorers saw."

Ambrose's vivid retelling of Lewis and Clark's journey—*Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West*—caps a distinguished literary career that includes the 1994 bestseller *D-Day, June 6, 1944: The Climactic Battle of World War II.* Clearly the new book's unexpected success (16 weeks on the *The New York Times* bestseller list, last week at No. 6) delights him. Surrounded by the maps, photographs, antique muskets and presidential portraits that fill his red, white and blue office above the garage of his Bay St. Louis, Miss., house, Ambrose, 60, can scarcely contain his glee. "It's wonderful," he declares. "I'm sitting in clover!" And he lays his success squarely—and literally—at the explorers' feet (mainly those of Lewis, whom he considers the more colorful of the two men). "I've walked every step of that trail," he says. "I've made wakes [on the river] where Lewis made wakes,

◄ Ambrose is convinced that Meriwether Lewis (left), who killed himself at age 35, "was a textbook manic-depressive."

Photographs by Acey Harper

7/1/96 PEOPLE 101

Steve and Moira enjoy a quiet moment on their beloved Missouri River. Photo by Acey Harper for People Magazine*, July, 1996. Image courtesy of Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs.*

Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs in the Boardroom at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans on the occasion of the opening of the Road to Berlin *exhibit in December of 2014. Photo courtesy of Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs.*

University of New Orleans *The Essence of Higher Education*, 1986:

"No better way to learn…. You sit at the side of a riverbank where Lewis and Clark camped, following their footsteps and reading their writing as they describe the scene you've just seen. It is not as much teaching as it is sharing; but that's all good teaching is anyway… sharing."

Recounting the story behind his interest in Lewis and Clark, Dayton Duncan quoted Stephen Ambrose in a story for *The American West* magazine, "Trailing Lewis and Clark on the Missouri," May-June 1987. Ambrose: "It was in 1975, I was given a number of books to read including one about Lewis and Clark. I am ashamed to admit it, but here I was a Ph.D. from one of the best American History departments in the nation and I didn't know a thing about them. Starting at paragraph one, sentence one, I was hooked."

Duncan writes, "Hooked doesn't quite describe his [Steve's] condition. This is his sixth trip through the White Cliffs; he has retraced the entire trail three times. He has traveled the Lolo Trail in the Bitterroots of Idaho by truck and by backpack with groups and just his wife. Hooked? He once slept in a truck next to Lewis' grave in Tennessee. When a policeman stopped to move him along, Ambrose said, 'Officer, you've got to understand I am in love with this man.' The cop let him stay. And of course, he must be one of the few men alive to have read from the Lewis and Clark journals at a daughter's wedding. No, 'hooked' is too mild a word. A fish that's been hooked doesn't keep coming back for more bait."

University of New Orleans *Legacy Magazine*, Winter 1991:

On changing subjects and going "Back to the Soldiers. I find them much more fun to be with than the politicians. That is because soldiers are honest, and politicians are not. A politician's responsibility is to get re-elected, that may sound cynical, but most politicians are cynical about themselves and rightly so. There are exceptions, obviously – Washington, Jefferson, Eisenhower – but damn few of them in my lifetime."

On the University of New Orleans and staying there:

"UNO treats me very well, I like the city, I like the school, I like my friends here. My life is of a piece. I write books. I teach. I travel. I've got to the point where it's not thinking about going to another place, but that I can retire. Still, I have a hard time seeing why I should because I enjoy what I am doing so much."

Chi Psi Fraternity *Purple and Gold*, Fall 1994:

Admitting his triumphalist leanings: "History departments today aren't interested in politics or war or heroes but that's what people are interested in. Young people don't want to know about what labor unions were doing about women's rights in 1830. They want to know Andrew Jackson."

Great Falls Tribune Associated Press story, June 23, 1995:

On Lewis: "I admire him tremendously. I'm a Hero Worshipper. It's my business. If I were ever in a life-threatening situation that required an instant decision, I would without question do immediately what he told me to do."

The Chronicle of Higher Education, June 7, 1996:

"Readers will have to judge for themselves how thoroughly I understood him, but my feeling is that I got to know Lewis better than I know Ike or Dick, thanks to Lewis' journals. Not even the Nixon tapes, not even the hours that I spent interviewing Eisenhower, yielded so intimate a view of the man."

"I also envy Lewis: Imagine being the first white man to see the Rocky Mountains and the Great Falls of the Missouri River, or to catch and eat a cutthroat trout or to cross the

Continental Divide. Even more, imagine serving as Thomas Jefferson's personal secretary in the White House for two years, dining with the president almost every evening, and being tutored by him in the natural sciences in preparation for a thrilling and dangerous expedition."

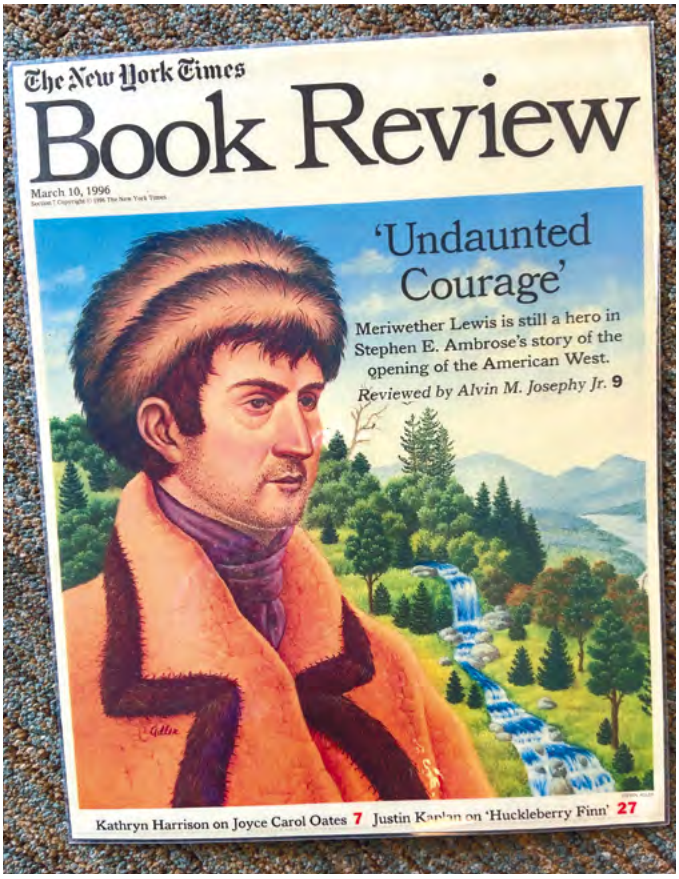
"I identified with Lewis in a way that I never could with Ike or Dick. I could never be a general or a president, but I could have done at least some of what Lewis did. Not so well obviously, but still, I can spend a day in a canoe, backpack over mountains, describe a plant or an animal…. And so, after twenty years on the trail with Lewis and after reading his journal entries over and over, my identification [with him] has been almost total."

Louisiana Cultural Vistas, Fall 1997:

"An awful lot of my friends told me I was crazy. Lewis and Clark Expedition? Nobody could remember it, nothing happened, what are you going to write about? I persisted only because I really wanted to write this story. I wish I could say that I am so smart that I figured out that 1996 was the time to bring out a new Meriwether Lewis biography but it was just I had other things to do [before then]. It had nothing to do with my sense of the market or what American people were looking to read. I had discovered in the great hoopla that surrounded the 50th anniversary of D-Day in 1994, how much this country is yearning for a hero and for a sense of unity. D-Day certainly gave it to them and so does Meriwether Lewis…. This guy is a genuine authentic hero and a man of Undaunted Courage who had a lot of clay on his feet. And who ended up killing himself at age 35, in a way a hero for our time. What I want to know is how you do things? It's kind of science fiction in reverse. How did they measure distance? How did they start a fire on a rainy morning when they didn't have dry newspaper and a match? How did they kill grizzly bears with those little light Kentucky long rifles? How did they do things? There's a zillion things I'd like to ask him. I'd like to ask him about some of the gaps in his writing. But mainly I'd want to know how he did things."

"Write about people and you will get readers."

"It has always struck me as a shameful thing that English departments in the United States do not teach the journals of Lewis and Clark. It is our national epic. This is our *Odyssey*. The writing is so vibrant, so immediate. Being journals of course there is never any danger of flashing forward, but they never flash back. You are there in the canoe with them. It's just a wonderful piece of writing by both of them and by some of the enlisted men too."


The New York Times
Book Review
March 10, 1996
'Undaunted Courage'
Meriwether Lewis is still a hero in Stephen E. Ambrose's story of the opening of the American West.
Reviewed by Alvin M. Josephy Jr. 9
Kathryn Harrison on Joyce Carol Oates 7 Justin Kaplan on 'Huckleberry Finn' 27

Review of Undaunted Courage *in* The New York Times Book Review*, March 10, 1996, by Alvin M. Josephy Jr.*

"A very famous political scientist said to me once, 'I am so jealous of you historians. You've got the power of the narrative!' I said, 'Why don't you have the power of the narrative?' And he said, 'It wouldn't be political science.'"

"The first thing I ever learned in doing military history is don't ever try to write about a battle until you've walked the ground. It's the biggest mistake you could ever make as a writer."

New York Times, November 2, 1997: "America Rediscovers Lewis and Clark" "More than 800,000 copies of a book by a historian on dead white males with footnotes have been sold. I am more than surprised. I'm flummoxed."

New Orleans Magazine cover story, December 1998: "On Top of the World – Historian Stephen Ambrose – Our Warrior of the Year"

"I've walked every step of the trail, I've made wakes [in the river] where Lewis made wakes and I've sat around his campfires."

"I remember our landlord [in Madison] shocked us when he said, 'If you are not liberal when you are young, you have no heart. If you are not conservative when you are old, you

have no brain.' I think it is natural to become conservative as you get older. As your car gets bigger and your income tax does too, what those Republicans are saying about tax cuts begins to have appeal."

U.S. News & World Report, December 7, 1998:

"Ambrose spearheading a campaign by lobby group American Rivers to 'repair a river to one that Lewis and Clark would recognize.'" At the time my father called the Missouri River "a bloody disaster."

Great Falls Tribune, December 10, 1999: "Ambrose, 'Remove the Dams'" "Historian's latest suggestion goes beyond where even staunch environmentalists only tiptoe." Quotes Ambrose: "Some of the earnings from the sale of *Undaunted Courage* go right back to the river," referring to his support of several interpretive centers along the trail. "I would like to see it [dam removal] happen and I will support efforts to make it happen, I talk about it a lot and I'm asked about it a lot. Let's get rid of all the dams on the Missouri River."

"What do I see a century from now? No dams on the Missouri River. None."

"One of the big things of the 21st century, you're going to see it at the Revolutionary war battleground, at Plymouth Rock and you're going to see it in Montana and the more people can see it in Montana as Lewis and Clark saw it the more are going to come."

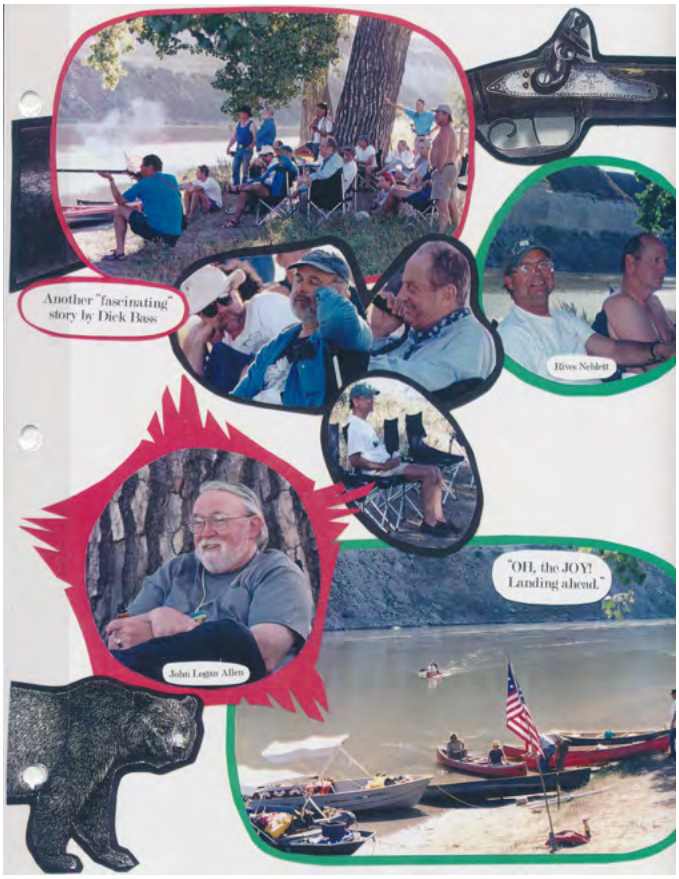
Concerning the debate on cows vs. cottonwoods in the Missouri Breaks, according to the *Tribune*, "nor is he likely to back away from the sticky issues rolling in the Missouri these days, says his daughter Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs. 'He is so popular he is not afraid to be a lightning rod, to get things stirred up a little bit.'"

Southern Living, June 2001:

"I am an American. I've lived all over this country; I just don't have any other place than America that I call home."

Writing in *Smithsonian Magazine*, November 2002, on "Flawed Founders"

"I've spent much of my professional life studying presidents and generals, reading their letters and examining their orders to subordinates, making an attempt to judge them. None match Jefferson. In his last message to America, on June 24, 1826, Jefferson declined an invitation to be in Washington for the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. He wrote, 'All eyes are opened, or opening on the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them.' He died with the hope that the future would bring to fruition the promise of equality. For Jefferson, that was the logic of his words, the essence of the American spirit. He may not have been a great man in his actions, or in his leadership, but in his political thought, he justified that hope."



Page from scrapbook made by Ken Rendell of a trip following the Lewis and Clark Trail in Montana in August of 1999.

Undated advice to a niece: "My strong advice would be to head west. Specifically, California. That's where the future is, that's where the jobs are and are going to be. Also, San Francisco is the greatest city in the world, and L.A. isn't all that far behind. The competition is tough, fierce, etc. but the opportunities are marvelous." He goes on to extol the many job opportunities on the west coast and then tells her, "If you can't stand the idea of California (I don't know why but my own kids are so prejudiced against the state, but they are, even though they have hardly ever been there) go to New York. Get an entry level job in publishing or in any of the other thousands of fields open in New York. For sure you are not going to get anywhere in Portland as a waitress saving up to buy a car. You are an Ambrose, you have it in you, use your brains and abilities and personality and imagination

and GET GOING." He signed it, "with love from your Uncle and p.s. remember you asked for advice."

From time to time he would send me stories, interviews, and other items for his "biographer." One of my favorites is a story from the *Wisconsin State Journal* in Madison. The banner headline reads, "A liberal Totalitarianism; Ambrose: Madison's a nice place to visit but…." In his typical almost illegible scrawl, my father proudly noted the position of the story, "front page with a color photo." He was teaching a semester at his alma mater, the University of Wisconsin, in 1996 and cantankerously criticized some of the changes he observed in his old college town. The journalist wrote, "Ambrose clearly doesn't buy the myth that Madison is the exact center of the civilized world." The story goes on to quote him: "The level of self-satisfaction in this town is higher than anywhere else I have ever lived." He was bothered by the city's no smoking ordinance and limited access to dog walking. "I have never lived in a city where so much is forbidden. Have you ever looked at the list of things you can't do at the Arboretum? No walking dogs. No sports. I'd hate to be a dog owner in this town." And this: "And it is almost against the law here not to be happy. The pressure is almost palpable."

While my father loved the city of New Orleans more than any other, he eventually "retired" to a home on the Gulf Coast, but New Orleans always meant the most to him and kept him coming back. He said he "hitchhiked down here with my roommate leaving Madison at Christmas time. It was – honest to God – forty degrees below zero in Madison – not wind-chill factor – forty below. We got down here to New Orleans and it was one of those gorgeous high-pressure systems that come through in December and I thought, 'we've got to sign up.' I came back for my master's and as soon as I got my doctorate from the University of Wisconsin – in those days you had three to four job offers if you were all but dissertationed. The crunch was so bad I could pick from anywhere in the country, but I'd lost my heart to this ole sorry bag of bones city and I still have. It's really a fabulous place. So, I am a midwestern boy enthralled by the sin and the vibrance of New Orleans. We don't have those things in the Mid-West. I'm serious."

My father didn't write much about what we now call place-based education, but he sure believed in it, and would teach his students, children, and grandchildren that place, and the history of a place, had everything to do with understanding and not taking for granted the intrinsic value and implied responsibility of the resource. When we lived in Baltimore, I remember going with him, at around age six or seven, and a group of students to retrace Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg. There is a picture of him, triumphantly holding up a field hockey stick (meant to symbolize a rifle) and looking at his watch as he stands astride the high-water mark of the Confederacy. I don't have any other details from that memory, but it is classic Ambrose.

He liked to shake people up by predicting massive crowds at sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail as the nation commemorated the Bicentennial of their expedition. His best-seller status meant that he frequently was quoted in local papers urging the community to get ready for the hordes of tourists who were going to follow the trail. Although it is hard to settle on a final tally, it is safe to say millions of people participated in the commemoration in some way.

In compiling this essay, I returned to my roots, and to his favorite writing spot. Our family cabin in northern Wisconsin has changed little since the days he spent summers here with his mother and brothers, canoeing, fishing, swimming, and planting trees. Every morning his mother would call out to her sons the task of the day, "Water and wood, boys, water and wood!" The forest they planted is now being managed according to best practices of tree harvesting, and it will continue to flourish for the foreseeable future and beyond. The cabin is on a little lake, called Trippe Lake named for my great grandfather Colonel Harry S. Trippe, in an area of the state that is famous for its rivers, waterfalls, lovely CCC-built county and state parks, and an abundance of trees, mixed conifers and broad-leafed hard and soft woods. His writing place is on the sleeping porch at a desk that looks out onto the lake, where he could hear his children splashing and laughing and perhaps echoes of his mother's voice as well. His IBM Selectric typewriter is still here, covered now and long silent, but a reminder to me of a joke he would tell us: "If I had to list my most prized possessions, it would be my truck, my dog, and my typewriter." He once said of a British author who died at his typewriter, "I would like to go out that way."

He said, "The number one secret to being a successful writer is this: marry an English major."

My mother, Moira, his co-captain, shared his love of adventure and story. True to her Irish roots, she loved the lyricism of writing and poetry. Her extensive vocabulary and particular way of turning a phrase captured many an ear. She was his best and most reliable critic, and he followed her

advice in nearly every case. They truly enjoyed the give and take of working on a book together and her word of approval meant more to him than that of any other reader. He liked to say he considered himself a "storyteller," and that certainly was the case, but it was the ear of my mom that approved the first and last word.

People often ask me when the HBO miniseries based on *Undaunted Courage* is going to be released. The truth is I have no clue. My father sold the motion picture rights to the project long before HBO picked it up. It would be interesting to see it on the big screen, but like many things associated with movie making, the project never seems to move beyond the "green light" signal, and is always "on hold" or in pre-production or back at the drawing board. I know HBO's budget for the miniseries was the biggest they had ever entertained and that experts of every sort were consulted while they were filming. Having seen several of his books made into movies I think my dad would be amused by the ups and downs of HBO's effort to tell the story of Meriwether Lewis and perhaps a bit disappointed too. He would probably grumble, "Just read the damn book."

I last saw my father waving goodbye to me from his porch in the little Gulf Coast town of Bay St. Louis. I know we were both crying and that we both sensed it might be our final farewell. My husband and I still like to visit New Orleans even if my parents are no longer there. The world-renowned museum he helped build is there, rated number two in museums in the United States. We like to travel the Stephen E. Ambrose Memorial Highway to Bay St. Louis where he and my mother are buried side by side and share a common headstone. The house they built there on Beach Boulevard was destroyed by the hurricane locals refuse to name, preferring to simply call it "the storm." My parent's home was basically ground zero for Katrina, but when my mother decided she wanted to move back to Bay St. Louis there was no argument from us. She adored "the place apart," as Bay St. Louis calls itself. The people of Bay St. Louis loved my parents and the day after my father died, October 14, 2004,

Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs guiding a Lindblad-National Geographic excursion on the Columbia River, October 2018. Photo courtesy of Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs.

spoke from the heart in an article of appreciation printed on the front page of the local paper, *The Sea Coast Echo*.

"Ambrose Remembered: Locals Recall Famed Author as a Nice Man with a Big Yellow Dog," by Bennie Shallbetter. "He wasn't really ours, but we claimed him anyway. Having such a talented person in our community seemed to make us all feel just a little more special…. He rubbed elbows with the rich and famous, but will be remembered locally as a man who rode his bicycle around town with his sand-colored yellow retriever Pomp in tow."

"Ambrose worked in his office above the garage on Beach Boulevard in the home he and Moira shared. It was a place of creativity, somewhat cluttered, furnished plainly with various memorabilia scattered throughout."

Speaking about her own personal recollection of an event that featured a reading by Stephen Ambrose, local eatery owner Colleen Read said, "It was amazing to see him in such a small-town place reading from his books and talking. He commanded respect; it was an aura about him, though he knew about his illness, he came with great stature and carried on. I loved his humanity and was honored to be a part of it. When you looked out and you saw him ride by you somehow knew it was good to be here…he loved it here…a man who could have lived anywhere in the world he wanted, but he chose to be here."

And so, my father and mother rest in peace in a place they loved, and which loved them as well, under stately old oak trees that stand as guardians for the coast and have survived many horrendous storms. The words they chose for their epitaph say it all. "We proceeded on." ∎

Ambrose sporting his University of Montana Griz sweatshirt at his home in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Photo courtesy of Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs.

Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs is the author of two books about the Lewis and Clark Expedition: The Lewis and Clark Companion: An Encyclopedic Guide to the Voyage of Discovery *and* Why Sacagawea Deserves a Day Off and Other Lessons from the Lewis and Clark Trail. *She serves as Co-chair of the Lewis and Clark Trust. She serves on the Board of the Montana Preservation Alliance and on the Advisory Council of the American Prairie Reserve. She lives in Helena, Montana.*

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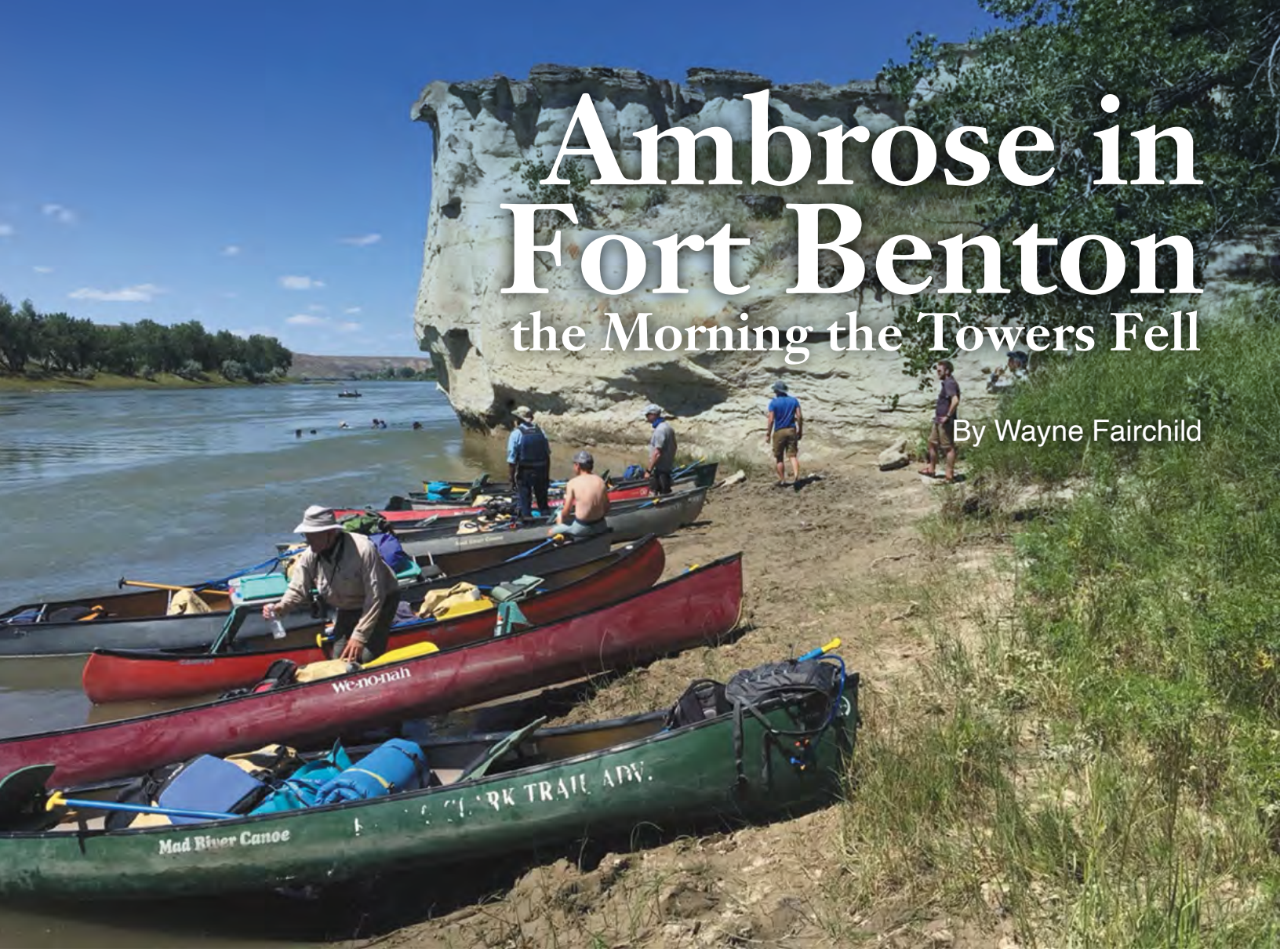
Photograph of Trapper Peak, Bitterroot Mountains, Montana, courtesy of Steve Lee.



Ambrose in Fort Benton
the Morning the Towers Fell

By Wayne Fairchild

The Lewis & Clark Trail Adventures flotilla in the White Cliffs section of the Missouri River. Photo courtesy of Wayne Fairchild.

On the twentieth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., I was reflecting on the morning of September 11, 2001. It seems like forever ago, but it also seems like yesterday. The world has changed plenty since 9/11.

My wife Gia and I are Missouri, Lochsa, and Salmon River outfitters headquartered in Missoula, Montana: Lewis and Clark Trail Adventures. We've taken thousands of people down the Missouri River in canoes, usually beginning at Coal Banks Landing east of Fort Benton. Over the years, we've had the pleasure of working closely with the Ambrose family. Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs still makes at least one run per year with us. The Bicentennial has been over for a long time, but there is still plenty of interest in Lewis and Clark.

Let me tell you about my day on 9/11 with author Stephen Ambrose and the Missouri River. The day started out as any other ordinary September day in Fort Benton, Montana: getting last minute supplies and ice for our three-day journey down the White Cliffs section of the Missouri River.

Dating back to the late 1980s at the University of Montana in Missoula, I ran around with and went to school with Hugh Ambrose. We quickly became friends, not only over beers at the pub, but also because of our common love of history, especially the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Hugh would tell me stories of his family's retracing the trail in the 1970s during the summer breaks from school. His father was doing research for books and taking students out west to experience the trail of Lewis and Clark along with other western historical sites.

One day Hugh told me his dad was working on a book on Meriwether Lewis and the expedition. I thought the timing couldn't be better! I had already planned on starting an outfitting business, based on the rivers and trails in Montana and Idaho, with a focus on history. Little did I know at that time, his book and my business would intertwine together over the years.

Undaunted Courage was one of the things that made the Bicentennial such a big deal. It's the book most people who come on our trips mention. While it would be hard to calculate how much Steve did to make the Bicentennial a phenomenal success, I think it would also be hard to exaggerate Steve's impact. Not to mention his starring role in Ken Burns' documentary.

In 2001, Ambrose was asked by the national American Rivers group to join a fundraising event for them on the Missouri and to organize a canoeing and hiking trip based on Lewis and Clark. I was asked to outfit the canoe portion of the trip. This would be my second trip with Stephen and his wife Moira, after my first back in 1999.

After getting fresh ice for the trip, I drove to the historic Grand Union Hotel in Fort Benton to pick up the guests and Stephen and crew. Usually, everyone is waiting outside the front door anxious to get going. But this day, there was no one out front and that seemed very strange. I parked the van and headed inside to the lobby. There they all were, glued to the TV in the Grand Union bar. They began to tell me the sequence of events, or as much as they knew at 8:30 a.m. Mountain Time (which would have been 10:30 Eastern Time). An airplane had hit the World Trade Center. At that point in my Montana world, I was more concerned with getting everyone into the river so we didn't arrive at camp too late, not really understanding the gravity of the situation.

After about ten minutes of trying to figure out what was

The Grand Union Hotel in Fort Benton, Montana. Photo courtesy of Google Images.

going on in New York, Stephen gathered everyone together outside and gave an impromptu speech to calm everyone's nerves. He reminded everyone that there was nothing anyone could do from the lobby of the Grand Union. The whole country would be at a standstill and there was a river trip to do. America had been through severe national trials before and had triumphed over every adversity. There was a day when Fort Sumter was the dramatic headline, and later Pearl Harbor. And the Kennedy assassinations, and the killing of Martin Luther King Jr., and the Challenger disaster. We Americans face every national crisis with undaunted courage. We persevere, regroup, and we always prevail. With his characteristically frank style of delivery, Steve summed it up with, "So we're going to the river! God Dammit," or something to that effect.

Some members of the tour group had offices and colleagues in New York, so they were very concerned, but Steve made it clear that there was nothing any of us could do from Fort Benton in Montana, and there probably weren't going to be flights to New York any time soon.

The group made it to the embarkation point at Coal Banks Landing and launched our canoes without knowing that another plane had hit the second tower, nor about the other attack in Washington, D.C., nor about the plane that went down in rural Pennsylvania. We did not know about the Twin Towers' collapse in lower Manhattan. All we knew then was that a commercial airliner had been flown into the World Trade Center. Steve knew instantly that it was not an air traffic accident.

Meanwhile, my crew, Gia, Casey, and Craig, had already left Coal Banks in the motorized gear boat to set up camp at Eagle Creek, where Lewis and Clark camped on the outbound journey in May 1805. They had no idea what was happening in New York and around the country. The first they would hear of it is when the lead canoe guides arrived at Eagle Creek later in the afternoon. And they only had swirling verbal explanations, no visual images to comprehend the carnage.

At camp the first night we started to think something big was going on as we noticed there were no planes in the sky, so the talk around the fire was speculating on events. The next day was a typical, even normal day on the river, with heavy upstream winds as we slogged our way to Slaughter River camp, where the Lewis and Clark Expedition camped both coming and going.

Not until we got to the take-out at Judith Landing and were able to talk to folks there did we learn the horrible outcome of that day. After twenty years the world has changed a lot, but the banks of the Missouri are the same, the White Cliffs as magnificent and inspiring as ever. LaBarge Rock and Hole in the Wall are essentially unchanged since Lewis and Clark made their epic voyage more than 200 years ago. There was no better place to be on that fateful day of September 11, 2001. I've admire Stephen Ambrose all of my adult life, but never more than that morning in front of the Grant Union Hotel in north central Montana. ∎

Ambrose paddling in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Photo courtesy of Stephenie Ambrose Tubbs.

In 1989 Wayne Fairchild founded Lewis & Clark Trail Adventures, based in Missoula, a historical adventure company leading trips along the Lewis and Clark Trail in Montana and Idaho. Wayne and his wife Gia lead trips through the White Cliffs of the Missouri and the Missouri Breaks, and guide hiking trips along the Lolo Trail west of Missoula. He also offers whitewater rafting trips on the Lochsa and Salmon Rivers and through the Alberton Gorge of the Clark Fork River. Wayne spent four years in the U.S. Army as a paratrooper in Vicenza, Italy. He returned home and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Montana School of Forestry - Recreation Management Program. Wayne has been a long-time member of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. Learn more at https://trailadventures.com.

A Great Historian, a Great Writer, and a Great Road Story

In the old days, before the coming of the Covid-19 pandemic, I used to board about one hundred flights per year all over the United States. Back then, before the airlines provided essentially unlimited free video entertainment on screens embedded into the seat backs, airplanes constituted America's great reading room in the sky. I used to try to catch glimpses of the covers of what everyone else was reading as I ventured down the aisle. It's amazing how many different subjects the small 3-D object called a "book" can contain: how to succeed in business, how to build a tiny house; the Koran, the Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, *Black Elk Speaks*, the I-Ching; Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz*; a biography of Patton and a biography of Pee-wee Herman. It's a Gutenberg miracle.

In all those years, on nearly every flight I boarded, someone was reading *Undaunted Courage*. On some occasions, particularly in the years 2000-2010, I often saw two or three or four people reading it in seats scattered far apart.

I know people who like to quibble with the work of Stephen Ambrose. He's a popularizer, a mere storyteller, a triumphalist, a synthesizer, too dependent on other books on the same subject…. Quibble if you wish, but the fact remains that *Undaunted Courage* is still the best one-volume account of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Its only rival in telling the whole story in a single volume is Gary Moulton's *The Lewis and Clark Expedition Day by Day*.

In the run-up to the Bicentennial, I had the good fortune to spend some time with Mr. Ambrose in Helena, Montana, in Bismarck, North Dakota, in Lewiston, Idaho, in New York City, and out on the trail. We broke bread together several times at the Montana Club in Helena. I had the honor of introducing him at some public events. He was gratified when I said from the podium that *Crazy Horse and Custer* was my favorite Ambrose book, and then recited one of my favorite passages. Steve's daughter Stephenie and I have been friends for several decades now. In Bismarck once, at the beginning of his lecture, Steve offended my edgy sister by telling a mildly sexist joke, but my mother had an unapologetic crush on him (get in line, Mother!). The buckskin swagger, the raffish glance, the gravelly voice, the lusty laugh, and the sense he gave off that the best conversations begin with a dram of bourbon – all these factors made any encounter with Stephen Ambrose unforgettable. You can hear some of that "voice" occasionally in *Undaunted Courage*, but only if you had previously listened to Ambrose speak.

My father had a crush on him too, though for different reasons. Charles Jenkinson, of Dickinson, North Dakota, was a Richard Nixon detractor before it was cool. For his birthday once I flew my parents to Washington, D.C., where Steve was lecturing at the National Archives on the second volume of his biography of Nixon. As far as my father was concerned, he was meeting the Beatles. He stood in line for a long time to get his book signed, asked Ambrose some obscure question about John Dean, and, after returning home, gushed about his encounter so often that his friends began to cross the street to avoid him. My mother and I wondered if he were going to vow that he would never wash his hands again after shaking Steve's.

It's important to remember that the Lewis and Clark Expedition was only one of Professor Ambrose's historical interests. His long-term reputation will rest more on his five books on the life and achievement of Dwight D. Eisenhower, including the authoritative two-volume biography, and his three-volume biography of Richard Nixon. More than anything else, Ambrose was a military historian (*D-Day*, *Crazy Horse and Custer*, *The Wild Blue*). In fact, some of the greatest insights in *Undaunted Courage* come from Ambrose's understanding that Lewis and Clark were leading a military reconnaissance mission; they were Enlightenment explorers, but they were operating under the aegis and the protocols of the United States Army.

It's hard to imagine the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition without Stephen Ambrose at or near the center of it. Not only did he write the most accessible book ever written about the expedition, with more than two million copies sold worldwide, translated into a number of foreign languages, including Korean, but he went on to be the star of the 1997 Ken Burns-Dayton Duncan PBS Lewis and Clark documentary, and he contributed both his fame and generous dollops of money to the national commemoration. It was a terrible loss that he didn't live to see it through. Ambrose died of lung cancer on October 13, 2002. He was just sixty-six years old. Nobody in the Lewis and Clark world could draw a crowd like Stephen Ambrose.

It is also hard to think of a book on another subject of American history that has had the same impact as *Undaunted Courage*. Try to name the single volume that captures the essence of the Civil War or the Revolution of 1776 or World War I or the Great Depression. Perhaps the closest analogy would be William L. Shirer's 1960 classic *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*.

In the last two weeks, I read *Undaunted Courage* from cover to cover for only the second time. Like many others, I devoured the book when it first appeared a quarter century ago, recognizing instantly its superiority to other single-volume narratives of the expedition, including David Lavender's excellent *The Way to the Western Sea*. I have over the last quarter century read sections of *Undaunted Courage* countless times, but now I wanted to read it through and assess it for myself.

In 521 pages I found only a handful of things to quibble with. I know that if Steve were writing today he would not use the words *squaw*, *brave* (as in Indian brave), or *red men*, and, as both Gerard Baker and Elliott West suggest in this issue of WPO, Ambrose would almost certainly now incorporate post-Bicentennial perspectives provided by Native Americans, bioregionalists, ethnohistorians, and environmental historians. Still, what struck me most in this re-reading of *Undaunted Courage* was Steve's extraordinary sensitivity to questions of race and slavery, including Jefferson's sad complicity, his criticism of the captains' occasional lapses into cultural haughtiness and rhetorical huff and puff, and his insistence that the captains did not take full advantage of Sacagawea's diplomatic capacity, even among her own Shoshone. This time through I was also delighted by Ambrose's sense of humor. For example, when Lewis deceived his Shoshone hosts with a strategic lie about Clark's whereabouts, Ambrose calls what Lewis said "a stretcher," a word Mark Twain made famous in the mouth of his young hero Huckleberry Finn. Huck says of his creator Mark Twain: "he told the truth, mostly." When you can enjoy reading a serious work of history, and laugh out loud now and then, you know you are in the presence of a true master.

Undaunted Courage was a perfect storm: twenty-five years ago, a great writer took on a great story – the American epic – at the high-water mark of its national popularity. And, meanwhile, the genius Ken Burns was standing by with his 16mm camera.

Clay Jenkinson

Lewis & Clark
Trail Heritage Foundation

PO Box 3434
Great Falls, MT 59403